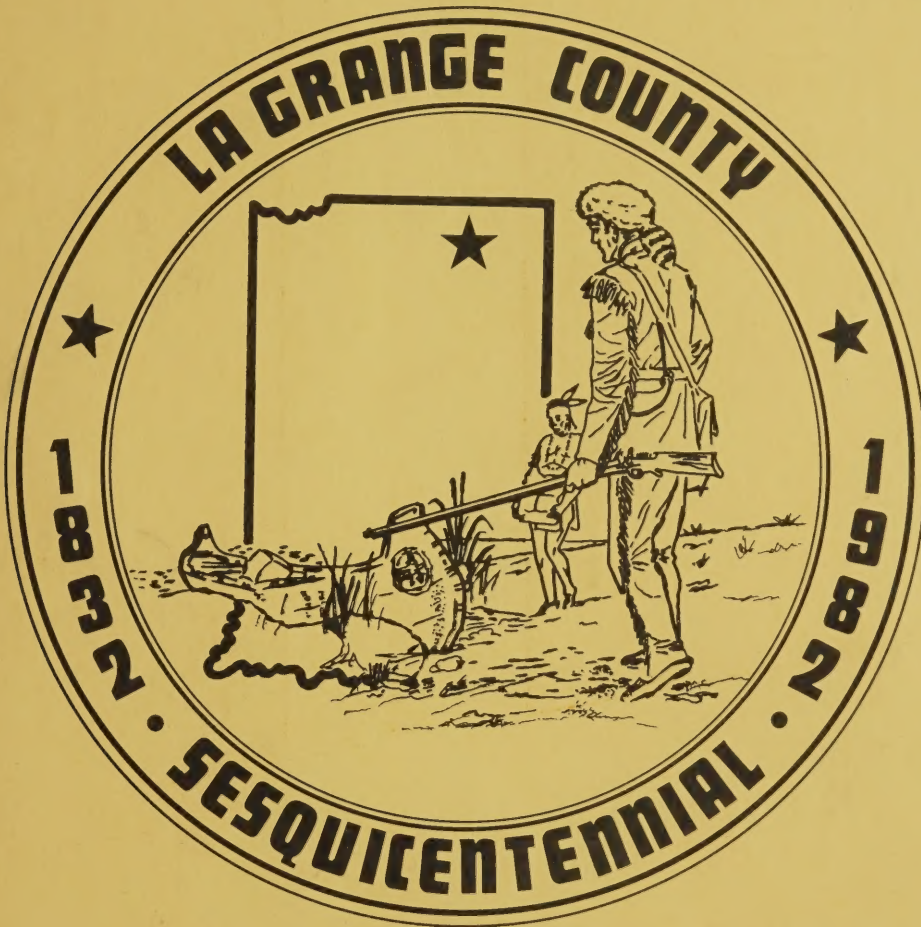


\$2.00

7 Score and 10

LaGrange County's

150th year



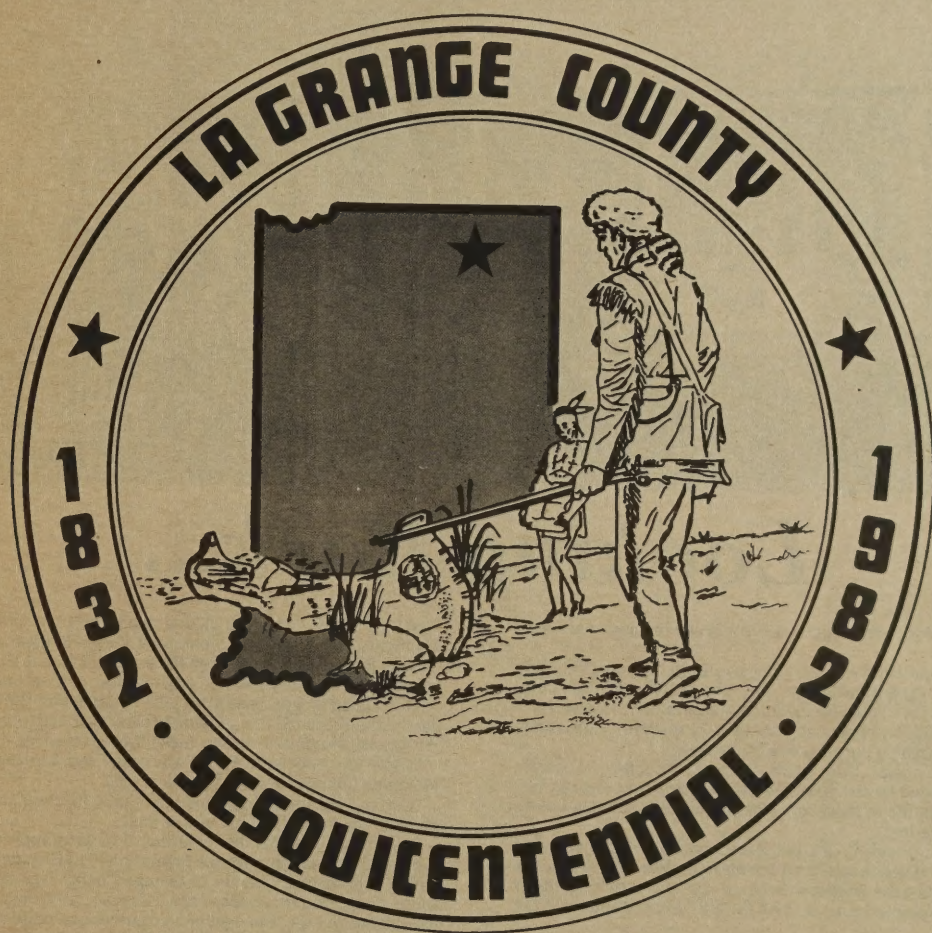
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The Countian

7 Score and 10

LaGrange County's

150th year



The Early Years...

Fall-1982

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Looking Back...

Take the time to look around, and you'll see history in all manner of things.

It is in the architecture of the older homes in the county...in the sweep of our farmlands...in the character of our communities...and it is written on the monuments in our cemeteries.

You won't find, however, any battlefield markers. LaGrange County was peaceably conceived in that respect.

That doesn't mean that there weren't struggles of heroic proportions waged by the first settlers to carve out enough farmland to sustain them, however. Most of these quiet battles were won...some were lost.

It is the land which is the brick and mortar of the county's history. The land which nurtured the buffalo, deer and elk for the first inhabitants—the Indians—became the ever-growing tracts on which were planted corn and wheat and other staples for the white settlers.

While we think of our history as beginning with the first white settlers, the area which became LaGrange County 150 years ago was home to the Indians for hundreds of years before the first pioneer families appeared.

The sweeping prairie lands, marshes and woodlands of what is now LaGrange County were the hunting grounds—not only for the resident Potawatomes, but also for the hunting parties of the Miami, the Piankeshaws, the Twightvees and the Shocks.

It is believed the French explorer, LaSalle, passed through the county in 1679 or 1680 during his exploration of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River areas. French traders and missionaries followed, and soon there were a series of crude outposts and trading centers situated at Detroit, Fort Wayne, Tippecanoe County and at Vincennes.

The English gained possession of these forts at the close of the French and Indian War in 1760.

At the close of the Revolutionary War, England ceded to the Colonies only the territory actually in their possession. The North-

west Territory, which included what is now Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin, remained under British control until George Rogers Clark captured the principal fort at Vincennes and claimed the territory for the fledgling state of Virginia.

An ordinance was passed in 1787 establishing the territory as part of the United States. It banned slavery in the territory and set the foundations for education and religious freedom.

In 1800, the Indiana territory was organized. The organization of Michigan followed in 1805; Illinois in 1809.

It wasn't until 1816 that the State of Indiana came into being and the first General Assembly was called.

On February 2, 1832, the Governor of Indiana approved an act of the Indiana legislature for the formation of LaGrange County.

The first white settler in LaGrange County was one Benjamin Blair who came down from the Michigan Territory in 1828 and constructed a log cabin west of a large Potawatomie settlement on the Pigeon River at which is now Howe. In short order, settler's cabins were put up on the Fawn River and the Pigeon River. In 1829 and 1830, the first settlers moved into what is now VanBuren, Greenfield and Springfield Townships.

The Potawatomes were, in large part, indifferent to the incursion of the settlers. They were, however, curious about the white man's ways—his preoccupation with planting and keeping domesticated animals—when there was the bounty of the prairies, woodlands and marsh areas.

As the settlers' numbers increased and their land holdings grew, it was inevitable that the Indians' way of life was doomed here. In 1832, the Potawatomes surrendered the last of their large land holdings in the area and within three years were moved to reservations in the West.

It was not an exemplary period in the history of the United States. For the most part, the Indians were duped, exchanging large tracts of land for a fraction of their worth.

It was in the mid-1800's that the county experienced perhaps its most explosive growth as settlers moved in to purchase patches of prairie, woodland openings and partially-cleared land.

The concern with the land has continued pretty much since then. LaGrange County has remained a rural county with many century-old farms and farm families.

Settlers found county blessed with resources

Natural History and Products of LaGrange County

Taking the development of life as a basis of classification, geologists separate the history of the earth's crust into four grand eras. The first includes all that infinitude of ages, which elapsed from the time the earth was hurled into space, a mere mass of intensely heated gasses, "without form and void," up to when there began to be developed, the earliest forms of life. This division is called Azoic time, or time without life. With the appearance of the first forms upon the earth, begins the Paleozoic time, or era of ancient life. This era is subdivided into three ages. The first is named Silurian, or age of mollusks and the lowest forms of life. The second is the Devonian, or age of fishes; and the third is called the Carboniferous age, or the age in which the earth produced that wonderful growth of vegetation which now forms our beds of coal. The third grand era is called the Mesozoic time, or the time of middle life, and it is distinguished by the development of enormous reptiles which swarmed upon the land and laved their huge bodies in the waters of the yet heated ocean. The Cenozoic time, or the era of recent life, comes fourth and last in order, and during this period, all the higher orders of life, including man, were brought into existence.

By careful observation and study, geologists have determined that the rocks, underlying about forty counties in the north-eastern part of the State of Indiana, were formed during the Silurian age. These rocks are a kind of gray limestone, and are often more than a thousand feet in thickness. They are almost wholly composed of the remains of the lower forms of marine life, such as radiates, mollusks, and articulates. But it is only in the southern counties of this section that these Silurian rocks are found at the surface; the northern counties being covered by the great northern drift, which, in many places, reaches the depth of several hundred feet.

Thus we find that the real rock which underlies LaGrange County, was formed during a very remote period of geological history; while the surface, with which we have more to do, was formed more recently, and of material transported here from more northern regions. The question as to the cause of this vast drift is one that has long puzzled the minds of geologists; but the prevailing theory is, that it was caused by the action of immense glaciers. Nearly every part of the earth's crust has been subject to frequent changes of elevation. When the Silurian rocks were being formed by the deposition of shells, a shallow inland sea covered all this region of country; and the whole of what is now North America, enjoyed an almost tropical climate. But as time rolled on, the continent gradually became more and more elevated, and the climate became colder and colder, until at last the whole northern part of North America was covered with snow and ice thousands of feet thick; from these vast ice fields, there issued with slow motion, but almost irresistible power, those enormous glaciers, or rivers of ice, in whose paths mountains were reduced to pebbles, and the hardest rocks were ground to sand. As these glaciers moved southward, the increasing heat melted and diminished them until they finally disappeared, giving rise to numerous rivers that dashed onward to the ocean. The melting of the glaciers, of course caused the deposit of those immense masses of rocks and earth which had been transported from the far north. These deposits form what is called the great northern drift; and the southern limit in Indiana is not far from the city of Indianapolis. South of that line, we find none of those large rounded granite boulders such as are so plentiful in this county. After long ages of glacial action, the continent began to slowly subside; and as the climate again grew warmer, the limit of the moving wall of ice was gradually pressed toward the North. Each returning summer the land was deluged with terrific floods, flowing from the melting glaciers. These annual floods served to still further grind and mix the enormous glacial deposits, until at last the wall of ice was pushed so far north that the water from the melting mass found shorter passage to the sea; and all this region of country was left a gently rolling surface, much as we now find it.

NO METALS

As the drift in LaGrange County extends

to a depth of several hundred feet, we need never expect to find any of the metals except such as have been transported here in very small quantities by the drift, or deposited from the waters of mineral springs, which are found in abundance in many parts of the county. In several of the marshes with which the county abounds, considerable deposits of iron have been formed by the decomposition of certain kinds of plants which seemed to collect, in their growth, the particles of iron from the surrounding soil and water.

MARSHES

The marshes found in this county may be divided, as to their origin, into two classes; those formed by vegetable growth in and around lakes, and those formed by vegetable growth around springs. The cold wet soil prevents the production of corn or wheat upon the marshes; but they are valuable as hay meadows and pastures. No perfectly satisfactory theory has yet been advanced as to the origin of the beautiful prairies that are found in this county. The rich black soil has undoubtedly been formed by vegetable decomposition similar to that which is going on in some of the marshes today; and as we find the soil differing greatly, in chemical composition, from that of the timbered lands, we conclude that this difference has been instrumental in promoting a tendency to produce the smaller plants in preference to the larger ones which compose our forests.

LaGrange County lies wholly within the St. Lawrence basin; and is drained by the Elkhart River in the south and Crooked Creek and Pigeon River in the north and east. These streams are large and never-failing, being fed by springs; and they afford a water-power not excelled in the State. The average altitude of the county is about nine hundred feet above the level of the ocean, and four hundred feet above the level of Lake Michigan. It lies so near the dividing line between the St. Lawrence and Mississippi basins, that a tributary to the Wabash rises within three miles of the southeast corner of the county. The surface is rather level, sloping slightly to the northwest though in some places, is slightly undulating.

LAKES

The presence of numerous lakes, covering in the aggregate about four thousand acres, so influence the climate of this county, that a complete failure of crops has never been known. About six-tenths of the county is barrens, or oak openings, one-tenth prairies, and the balance heavy timber and marsh. The soil of the barrens is a sandy loam; in the timber there is a large proportion of clay. The former is well adapted to wheat, the latter to wheat, corn, grass and oats; and the prairies to wheat and corn.

In many of the marshes, immense beds of marl are found; this will one day be a source of wealth to the county, as it is very valuable as a fertilizer, and when burned, forms excellent lime. In the absence of quarry stone, the granite boulders that are found plentiful upon the surface, are very convenient for building purposes. Brick clay, of the first quality, is also found in many parts of the county.

NATURAL HISTORY

But little attention has ever been paid to the natural history of this county; and there are probably, animals and plants here that have never been classified. Of the quadrupeds, the elk, buffalo, panther, wildcat, bear, otter, and beaver have long since disappeared, and deer are now seldom met with. Squirrels of several varieties are quite numerous in the woods, and the fox, polecat, ground hog, rabbit, mink, muskrat, weasel, mole, mouse, and gopher are found in particular localities, but not usually in great numbers. Rats, formerly unknown here, are now becoming quite numerous. The usual domestic animals such as dogs, cats, horses, cattle, sheep, and hogs are of course found here.

BIRDS

A complete list of the birds of this area has never been made. A few years ago, singing birds were rare, but this number has increased with the advance of civilization until there is now a great variety; being all grain-eaters, their increase is due directly to the increased number of grain fields. Of the birds originally found in this county, the most common are the wild turkey, prairie fowl, quail, pheasant, pigeons, geese, ducks, cranes, and snipes; and the carnivorous birds such as the eagle, buzzard, raven, crow, hawk, and owl are occasionally found.

Other birds, such as the wood-pecker, cat-birds and ground-bird, plover, king-fisher, and, swallow are quite numerous.

SNAKES

Reptiles are not very plentiful. Many of the harmless ones such as the black, striped, green and water snakes, the blue-racer lizard, and several varieties of turtles are still found, but the poisonous rattlesnakes and copperhead are now seldom seen.

FISH

The lakes and rivers are well stocked with fish, yet the variety is not very great. The principal kinds are the pickerel, perch, sucker, buffalo, catfish, sunfish, dogfish, redbreast, and bass.

A few dollars spent by the county in stocking the rivers and lakes with salmon and white fish, would be money well invested.

INSECTS

Insects are found in great variety; but those more commonly met with are wasps, hornets, honey bees, bumble bees, yellow jackets, spiders, moths, butterflies, beetles, ants, flies, grasshoppers and mosquitoes.

The weevil is very seldom found in the wheat, and chinch bugs are scarcely known. A voracious, striped beetle has waged such a war upon potatoes, for the last few years, as to make that crop a partial failure; but the bugs have become so lessened in number, that the last potato crop was injured but little by them. A few insects are found which are injurious, but the vast majority, known in this county, are beneficial to man. Fire flies occur in considerable numbers, and, during a warm summer night, their display of flashing lights is magnificent. Many species of worms are known, nearly all of which, are, in one way or another, beneficial.

'The other' Ben Blair Bible-thumpin' man

Historians tell us two Benjamin Blairs figured in the county's early history. One was the first settler, apparently a quiet and industrious man of whom little has been written.

The other became something of an area vagabond who walked the early roads shouting Biblical verse and disrupting "Sunday meetings" when he happened upon them.

The following is a recollection of Ben Blair, the vagabond, by Gary R. Frisbie, an early settler:

There were two Ben Blairs in LaGrange County. The first settler born in 1770 and the other in one in 1814. This concerns the life and antics of the second Ben Blair born in 1814.

Ben Blair, one of the noted characters in the early history of LaGrange Co., is produced here in miniature, from a photograph belonging to Mr. Ephraim Latta, and Gary R. Frisbie contributed the following sketch:

"It is difficult to give the history of men when they never made any history, but these are a few facts connected with the life of Blair that people would like to know.

"Benjamin Blair was born in the state of New York in 1814. He came to LaGrange Co. in an early day and was one of the first settlers of the county. He was married to Nancy Nelson, June 20, 1841 by Anthony Nelson, justice of peace. At that time they lived in the west part of the county, and we can give but little account of their married life. Hard work did not seem to suit his taste and he shunned it.

"Ben used to make axe handles, and Hezekiah Davis said that was all he was good for. Our memory of Ben dated back some sixty-five years. Ben and his wife had two children and as the years passed their lives became incompatible and Mrs. Blair took her spinning wheel tour with a man more congenial to her taste, and Ben took to the road. What became of the children we do not know.

"Ben got the idea that he was called to preach but people generally thought that he was at the wrong end of the line when the message came. He did not get the flower now and then when he could get in a church gathering. At one time he got a squad of hearers, mostly boys, and when in the middle of his talk the boys became noisy Ben gathered up his cane, Bible, string of trinkets and said meeting was out, and marched out of the house. He happened at Robin's Corners on Sunday during meeting and as soon as the preacher sat down he was on the floor and jumped high and dry and brought down his cane with a thud and said, by the Grace of God he was going to talk, and talk he did for a few minutes and sat down and was quiet. Sometimes he got boisterous at gatherings and had to be marched out.

Some firsts

Important Dates in the History of LaGrange County

The first white settler in LaGrange county was Benjamin Blair with his family, half a mile west of Lima, in 1828.

The first trading house opened at Lima by Ica Rice in 1829.

The first preaching in the county by Rev. Erastus Nelson, 1829.

The first settlers in Van Buren and Greenfield townships in 1829.

The first settlement in Springfield township in 1830.

The first church organized in the county was near Lima, at the home of Robert Hamilton by the Methodists in 1831.

The first township election in Greenfield township then covering all the northern part of the county, in October, 1831.

First gristmill built at Mongo, and first sawmill at Lima, 1831.

First settlement in Newbury township, 1831.

First organization of LaGrange County in 1832.

First county election in spring of 1832.

First county seat at Lima, 1832.

First term of circuit court at the home of Moses Rice, October 1832.

First war scare over "Blackhawk War" in 1832.



Coming of the white man started the slow demise of the Indian's free way of life

The arrival of the first white settler in what is now LaGrange County was an event which was to change forever the life of the original inhabitants—the Indians.

Curiously, the appearance of Benjamin Blair on the banks of the Pigeon River in 1828 was a matter of little concern to the Potawatomies in the Indian village of Mongouquing (now the site of Howe).

Sidney K. Ganiard, an early educator in LaGrange County, painted the following word picture of that event in a talk to the Old Settlers' meeting in LaGrange June 13, 1902: "One morning in 1828 as the Indians sat in groups about the doorways of their wigwags, lazily watching the blue smoke curl in rings above their pipes, they saw approaching a white man. They gazed upon him with indifference, probably supposing that he was one of the many traders who so frequently visited them.

"But this man was no trader. The visit was fraught with consequences deeper than any since the days of the missionary. It was epoch-making in its significance.

"Instead of the gospel of peace, he was the forerunner of the gospel of work. In place of the cross of the missionary, he brought with him the axe of the settler.

"This man was Benjamin Blair, the first white settler of LaGrange County. Having removed from Ohio into Southern Michigan in August of 1828, he came into our county in December the same year, chose for himself a suitable portion of land and built a cabin about a mile west of Lima (Howe).

"The ring of the settler's axe was heard morning, noon and night. The birds' songs cheered his labor and the forest gave him food. Slowly the walls of the cabin rose and it was ready for occupancy with the new year."

"But meanwhile, other settlers came and when Mr. Blair moved his family into his new home in the early weeks of 1829, another cabin had just been finished and was already occupied on the north bank of Fawn River. This latter was a littler affair of one room and in it were crowded the two families of Nathan Fowler and Jason Thurston."

"And something else was also there... civilization, new-born to this wilderness."

"In spite of the conditions which today would seem to be decidedly unsanitary, the average life was long and the health of the people was most excellent. Appendicitis was unheard of, while the average settler did not even dare to indulge in the luxury of a liver complaint lest he should be regarded as a snob by his fellows and a millionaire by the assessor."

"In fact, about the only disease that these old settlers had was ague, a malarial fever which brought on the "shakes", and even this they shook off as soon as possible. In

some parts of the county, where the swamps and marshes were, everything shook so that even a dog could not retain his own fleas. The cows chewed their cuds automatically."

"Indoors, even before the blazing heat of the fireplace, the busy housewife shook the holes out of the doughnuts as she lifted them from the hot grease. Then, as she went to the big old dripping pan, she shook the cakes off from the holes. Thus, for weeks at a time, they had no doughnuts for their rye coffee.

"Ah! Those were wonderful days. Full of toil and hardship, but also blessed with peace and finally crowned with plenty."

"They were days of labor that lasted far into the night as the settlers applied the torch to the piled-up logs. As the blaze from these burning heaps shot upward they reddened the skies with the dawn of a great new day."

"Those blazing log piles marked at once the end and the beginning of many things. They were the funeral pyres of the wilderness. They were the colossal bonfires whose dancing flames ushered in the birth of civilization and progress."

"The 1882 History of LaGrange County contains the following description of the lives of the earliest settlers, written by John Paul Jones:

"The coming of each family meant the erection of a cabin and another opening in the forest by the felling of the timber for a clearing, and a preparation for crops. These clearings for the first year or two usually were limited to an acre or so planted to corn and vegetables, with perhaps a patch of oats or wheat.

"To be successful in those days in raising grain and 'garden truck,' required eternal vigilance to protect them from the wild turkey, deer, raccoon, squirrel and other animals with which this county, in the early day, was fairly swarming."

"The products from the little patch of ground in the clearing, and the game that was brought down by the unerring rifle afforded subsistence for the family. The spinning wheel and loom supplied the cloth for clothing and household purposes, save, however, where the prepared deerskin and the furs from the fur-bearing animals were utilized."

"Luxuries were obtained at great cost and many times at no small sacrifice. Groceries and the commonest kinds of merchandise in those days were catalogued as luxuries, to be indulged in in the most sparing manner."

"Trading posts were miles away through dense woods, without road or perhaps trail. The Indians, though generally friendly and harmless in this locality, were not always to be trusted and to be intercepted by them was attended by an uncertainty as to results."

Weston A. Goodspeed writes in the 1882 county history:

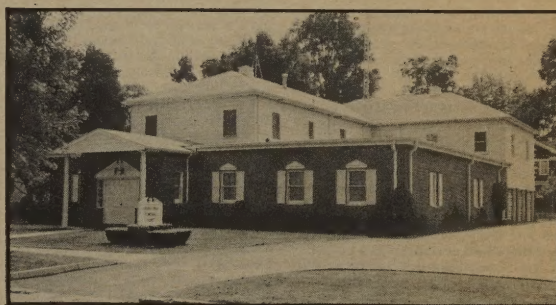
"They (the Indians) were consummate beggars, and were often extremely skillful in their efforts to secure coveted articles from the whites.

"They would quietly enter cabins without warning or invitation, seat themselves usually on the floor and light their pipes. In cold weather, they often were permitted to

roll themselves in their blankets and sleep upon the floor by the fire until morning. Sometimes the floor was covered with them.

"In about the year 1839, the Indians were removed and they were not afterward seen except for an occasional straggler who had sorrowfully returned to view for the last time the happy home of his youth."

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Last of Potawatomi chiefs bids an eloquent farewell to area's pioneer settlers

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The Noble County American, Albion

Nearly 90 years ago, Simon Pokagon, aging Chief of the Potawatomies, spoke in Albion at that community's Old Settlers' Reunion.

Pokagon, last of the Potawatomi chiefs, did not fit the mold of an "Indian warrior" as depicted on TV and the movies today.

After a typical Indian boy's upbringing in the woods and plains of northern Indiana, Pokagon attended Notre Dame in South Bend and Oberlin in Ohio.

Called the "Longfellow of his race," he was fluent in five languages, was an author and an accomplished musician.

Much of his life was spent in attempting to obtain from the government at least partial payment for the 3 million acres his father, Chief Leopold Pokagon, sold to the government in 1833. Eventually, he secured an appropriation of some \$150,000 which he divided among the remaining members of his tribe.

His address to area settlers on June 7, 1894, painted a picture of rapid change coming over the land. Where his tribespeople had lived and hunted and gathered food, they left the land largely as it was.

Increasing numbers of white settlers, however, were tilling the grasslands and tearing out the trees to fashion farms and rustic communities.

Following is the text of Chief Simon Pokagon's eloquent and touching address to the settlers:

I greet you one and all as the truthfulness of this land. I am indeed glad to meet you at this important gathering of the fathers and mothers who have reclaimed from an unbroken wilderness a paradise, if such there is on earth.

I would not have you think that I flatter myself. I have been invited here on account of my reputation for intelligence, as I most keenly realize you have looked forward to my coming with a sort of novel pride that you might point me out to your children and say, "Behold a living specimen of the race with whom we once neighbored, a race that we once loved and yet with that love was mingled distrust and fear."

Our people who sleep beneath your soil came here from the coast of the Atlantic. They were pioneers in their time as you are today. When they first entered these beautiful woodlands plains they said in their hearts, "We are surely on the borderland of the happy hunting grounds."

I pray you do not covet the narrow ground they occupied and thereby desecrate and hide their last resting place; for the good of yourselves and your children you had better erect some simple monument over their remains and engrave thereon, "An Unknown Red Man Lies Buried Here."

Our fathers here found game in abundance; the buffalo and deer had not yet learned to fear the face of man and they startled not at the twang of the bow. Here our people built their wigwams and their children played under the green pavilion of the mighty forest as happy as your children now play in the open field or on your decorated lawns.

I speak of this not complainingly for I have always taught my people not to sigh for years long gone by, nor pass again over the bloody trails their fathers trod. I fully realize that as pioneers of this land you had mountains of difficulty to overcome of which our race knew not. The same forest that frowned on you; smiled upon us. The same forest that was agony and death to you was our bulwark and defense; the same forest you have cut down and destroyed, we loved and our great fear was that the white man in his advance westward would mar or destroy it.

I realize fully, how hard you labored day in and day out; year in and year out, to reclaim your farms from the unbroken forests, until your labors were crowned with success, and the wilderness budded and blossomed as the rose.

Indeed you deserve great credit for what you have here accomplished, and I pray your children may fully appreciate the goodly inheritance they have and will receive from your hand.

As I survey the face of this country, I cannot refrain from saying to your sons and daughters, "Do not forget the command 'Honor thy father and mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God (Great Spirit) hath given thee.' To do them honor, you must be good to yourselves, keep your mouth clean from profanity, clean from cigarettes, clean from all that can intoxicate, and as your parents

cut down the mighty forests that covered this land; so may you push forward the great car of reform until all enemies that press down the right and uphold the wrong shall be overthrown.

Fathers and mothers How dear those names; and while I have here stood among strangers, my heart has continually whispered in my ears saying, Pokagon, your father and mother a century ago, passed and repassed this very spot along their winding trail.

My parents once lived near Plymouth in this state. Mr. Prentiss, an honored citizen of this country, who has just gone into the world beyond, were he alive and here today, would tell you that when he was a young man, lost and starving, he found our wigwam home, and how he shared our simple meals and beds, for many moons; we loved him dearly and when he left us we all wept. It rejoices my heart to feel that he and my father are in that great wigwam where there are many rooms prepared by our heavenly father. I am getting old and feeble and feel that one foot is lifted to step into the world beyond. I have stood all my life as a peacemaker between your people and my people, trying to soothe the prejudices of the two races towards each other. Yes, without bow or gun I have stood as one standing between two armies advancing towards each other for the fight, receiving a thousand wounds from your people and my own people.

In conclusion, permit me to say, I rejoice with joy of childhood that you have granted a son of the forest a right to speak to you, and the prayer of my heart shall ever be so long as I live, that the Great Spirit will bless you and your children and that the generations yet unborn may learn to know that we are all brothers and that God is the father of all.

Pokagon was keenly conscious of the devastating effect of alcohol on his tribe and all other American Indians. He devoted much of his life to a battle against "that despot-King Alcohol." His slogan was "Total Abstinence - Now and Forever."

"The intoxicating cup, that deadly enemy of our race," brought grief to Pokagon's own family. Olondaw, his only son, was sent off to boarding school at the age of 12. Three years later he returned home with a bottle of whiskey in his pocket and tales of drinking at school.

Although Olondaw threw the bottle down and declared to his sorrowing parents, "I'll never touch it again," he was unable to keep his promise.

In "Queen of the Woods" Pokagon Sadly relates, "as darkness succeeds the meteor's sudden glare, so his young life went out and left us in the midnight of despair!"

Pokagon's wife, Lonidaw, on her deathbed asked Pokagon to promise that "when I am gone you will fight as long as you shall live against that destroyer of our race."

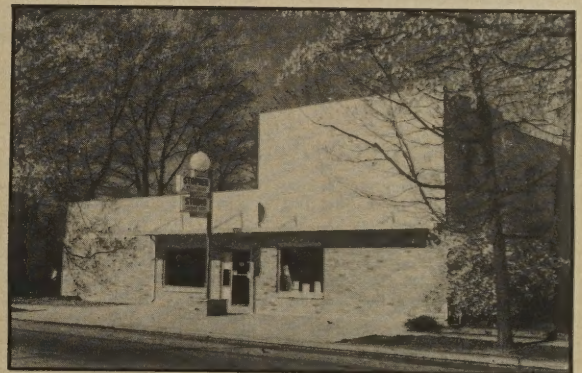
Simon Pokagon died January 28, 1899 at

his home near Hartford, Michigan, on the tribal lands of the Potawatomi. He was 68 years old.

A monument of him and his father stands

in Jackson Park in Chicago.

On this page is a reprint of the talk he gave at the Old Settlers meeting in Albion on June 7, 1894.



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The village now called Howe

Howe—first called Mongoquinong, then Lima and finally, Howe—has the distinction of being the first white settlement in LaGrange County.

It was a most practical site for the first rustic frontier settlement in this county. For many years Mongoquinong, or "Big Squaw Village" on the Pigeon River had been a major Potawatomi Indian village with a population estimated to be nearly 3,000 by early French traders.

It was an ideal setting—the river for fish, the woodlands and nearby marshes for game and the prairie for plots of maize.

With the arrival of the county's first white settler in 1828, it was reported that only about 300 Indians lived at the site. By that time, the large village apparently had dispersed into smaller enclaves up and down the river.

There remained, however, evidence of a much larger settlement. Traces of large garden areas were still visible and there were reports from the early settlers of an orchard which was still bearing fruit.

And there were well-worn trails leading out of the village—trails big enough to accommodate the white man's oxen teams and wagons.

The first white migrants into the Howe area came mostly from the north, out of Michigan. Settlers coming into this area from the eastern states had to turn north in northwestern Ohio because of the huge "black swamp" which prevented a directly western route of travel into northern Indiana.

It is reported that eight to 10 families lived in Howe in 1832, the year LaGrange County was organized. Four years later, the number of inhabitants had grown to 200. By 1840 an estimated 350 individuals were counted as residents of the village.

When the county was organized in 1832, Howe became the county seat. The first courthouse was constructed there as was the first school and the first church.

Howe also was the site of the first places of commerce in the county—grist mills, saw mills, general stores and places of business for frontier tradesmen.

In fact, the community became the center of trade for settlers in a 50-mile radius. The Indian trails became avenues of trade—wagon loads of goods coming in from the east, and wagon loads of grain and frontier products going back to the eastern markets.

The early development of Howe was stamped—as perhaps no other local community—with the presence of two men—Samuel P. Williams and John B. Howe.

Williams, a native of Connecticut, came to Howe from White Pigeon and opened a store in the village in 1837 which boasted an inventory valued at \$20,000—an unheard-of variety of goods. Williams purchased his goods in New York, shipped them by the Erie Canal to Buffalo, then transported them by lake vessel to Michigan City, then by wagon to Howe. Freight bills amounted to \$3,000.

Along with his mercantile interests, he became involved in



Downtown Howe in earlier days, a scene in which several of the village's present structures can be recognized.

banking institutions in southern Michigan and northern Indiana. He served in the Indiana House of Representatives in 1857.

Howe, for whom the village was named in 1909, came to the village from Marshall, Michigan, in 1833. He was a native of Boston, Massachusetts and a graduate, at 19, of Trinity College. In his first winter in Indiana he taught school in Howe, while he also prepared for a career in law.

He was the first county resident to become a lawyer and was praised by the circuit-traveling lawyers as one of the best in the Midwest.

In 1854, Williams and Howe founded the LaGrange bank at Lima, the first financial institution in the county and the forerunner of the State Bank of Lima.

Both men also were vitally interested in education. Williams founded a women's seminary in Howe in which three women teachers offered a classical course of studies. Enrollment ranged from 25 to 60 young women before the private school was closed in 1862 and sold to the village as a public schoolhouse.

The Lima School, which became one of the first—if not the first—public high schools in the state, was erected in 1874-75. Howe contributed \$2,500 towards its construction costs, in addition to the tax which was levied on all community residents.

Howe also served as a State Representative in 1840, and was a member of the Indiana State Constitutional Convention in 1850.

Both Howe and Williams worked tirelessly to establish a better road network through northern Indiana (and the village) to increase commerce in the area. Both also were major backers of the Grand Rapids Railroad through the county.

Upon his death in 1883, Howe bequeathed \$10,000 and his palatial

home to the Episcopal Diocese of Indiana. A year later, a church school for boys was established with the bequest.

The school, now Howe Military School, has grown from that first year and two students to one of the most prestigious boys' schools in the Midwest.

In 1842, it was decided to make LaGrange, at the county's geographical center, the county seat. Although Howe continued to

prosper for a time, LaGrange soon outgrew it in commerce and in size.

Although Howe no longer was the center of government in the county, its influence continued to be felt. The groundwork for a responsible county government had been laid... the heritage of a sound education had been established... in fact, the rudiments of community life as we know it today were carved out of the county's first wilderness village.



Christina (Chrissy) Hanch, who kept animals in her home near Howe, became known as the "Skunk Lady."

Howe School - part of our history



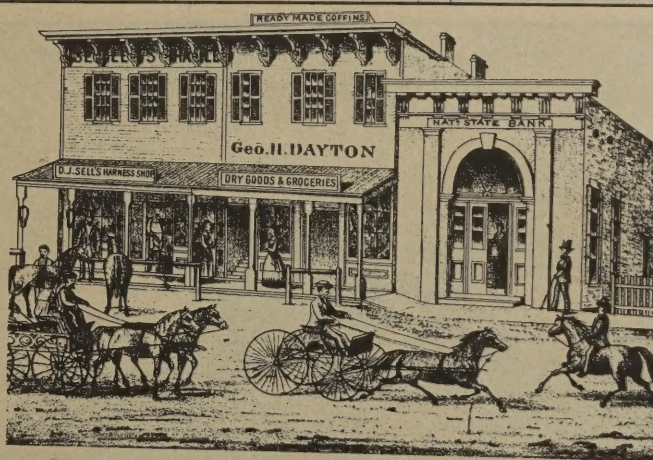
The Howe school as it appeared in its early stages of development.



The Howe Town Square once sported a band pavilion.



The Howe Grammar School in 1893.



The bank in 1873

*The deep imprint of the character and policies
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State Bank of Lima

Howe, Indiana



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HOWE TOWN BAND 1922

Front Row

Arthur Scott-Director, Lee Stuckey, Earl Minch, Earl Weiss, Walter Haybarger, Wm. Curtis, Dale Myers, Lynn Stuckey, Kenneth Willard

Back Row

Anson Smeltzly, Harry Gilbert, John Yunker, Ross Scott, Ralph Curtis, Frank Sixby, Earny Schaeffer, Sanford Juday, Myers, George Curtis



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Pride and confidence, each dependent on the other, made all of us what we are.

Today we reflect in pride only because we listen.



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MEMBER F.D.I.C.

Highlights from the early years

1828

In December, Benjamin Blair and family moved from Pigeon Prairie, Michigan, to Mongoquinong, or Big Indian Village Near what was to be Lima and became the first white settler in the county.

1829

Issac Rice arrives in LaGrange County and opens a trading post in what is now Lima Township. First settlers reported in what is now Van Buren and Greenfield Townships.

1831

The first church is organized near Lima with six members in the congregation. Grist mills are built at what was to be Mongo and Lima. The county's first election is held in Greenfield Township.

1832

The Black Hawk War breaks out in Illinois and Wisconsin and the county's settlers fear trouble with the local Indians. None develops. LaGrange County is separated from Elkhart County by the General Assembly...Commissioners hold first meeting...County is divided into Lima and Greenfield Townships...County Seat is situated at Lima, where a town plat is laid

out. Eden Township organized. First marriage license issued in the county.

1834

John B. Howe is admitted to the bar, becoming the first lawyer to settle in the county. Courthouse is built in Lima. Springfield Township is established.

1835

First schools are built in Springfield and Milford Townships. The town of Lexington (now Brighton) is laid out. Bloomfield Township is formed.

1836

The year Davy Crockett and a band of freedom-loving Texans were killed at the Alamo, the county holds its first presidential election. Martin VanBuren, a Democrat, gets 150 votes, William Henry Harrison, a Whig, 128. LaGrange Town plat laid out.

1837

The village plat of Ontario is made. Board of trustees of the LaGrange College Institute organized and the school building is commenced. The Potawatomi Indians are "removed" from the county. Clearspring, Johnson and Newbury Townships formed.

1838

The autumn this year is marked by extreme drought and unusual sickness among the settlers. Clay Township formed.

1839

The first application for a divorce in the county is made. The LaGrange College Institute is opened.

1840

First census taken. County population is 3,661. Another presidential election. This time Harrison, with the campaign slogan of "Tippecanoe and Tyler, too," gets 491 votes, and VanBuren, 225.

1842

The county's first newspaper, "The LaGrange Freeman", is published at Ontario.

1843

The LaGrange Phalanx, the county's first brush with communal living, is organized in Springfield Township. The county seat is moved from Lima to LaGrange, where a courthouse is commenced. The Ontario Woolen factory is built.

1844

"The People's Advocate" is published at Ontario, then moved shortly afterwards to Lima. County officers move from Lima to LaGrange. History's first telegraph message is sent from Washington to Baltimore.

1845

A hotel is built in LaGrange. "The Democrat" begins publication in Lima.

1846

Two LaGrange County families leave for Oregon via the Oregon Trail, which had been opened in 1842. The first Teachers' Institute in the state is held in the county. It is the year Elias Howe invented the sewing machine.

1847

First Normal School held at Ontario.

1848

Dissention among its members causes the collapse of the LaGrange Phalanx. Gold is discovered in California.

1849

A "large number" of county residents join the gold rush of '49, heading for California.

1850

The population of LaGrange County is 8,369. The Village of LaGrange has 328 residents.

1852

The State Legislature authorizes the organization of companies of Regulators in LaGrange County and the surrounding area to break up "thieves and counterfeiters" which had infested northern Indiana. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is published, creating renewed abolitionist fervor.

1853

The LaGrange Bank is organized at Lima. South Milford platted.

1854

An Amish Church is organized at Haw Patch. The Republican Party is created in Wisconsin to oppose the Kansas-Nebraska Act which left the issue of slavery to a vote of the settlers.

1855

Harvests are severely damaged by "deluging rains." Ground is broken for the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad.

1856

"War begins against the outlaws" in LaGrange County and surrounding counties by companies of Regulators. "The Herald," the first newspaper in the Town of LaGrange, begins publication. The LaGrange County Agricultural Society holds its first fair in the courthouse and grounds. The Lima High School is founded. The Republican presidential candidate, John C. Fremont, wins heavily in LaGrange County, but loses the national race to James Buchanan.

1857

"The LaGrange Standard" is founded in LaGrange a year after the town had been incorporated and the GR&I rail bed had been graded.

1858

Gregory McDougal, a "blackleg" leader and object of several campaigns by the Regulators, was caught and hung near Diamond Lake in Noble County. It was the year of the Lincoln-Douglas debates.

1859

A fire destroys a business block in Howe. "The LaGrange Democrat" is established in LaGrange. It is the year of John Brown's Raid at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, and the year the first oil well was drilled in this country, in Pennsylvania.

1860

The county's population is 11,350. Lincoln carries LaGrange County in the presidential election. The Pony Express is established out West.

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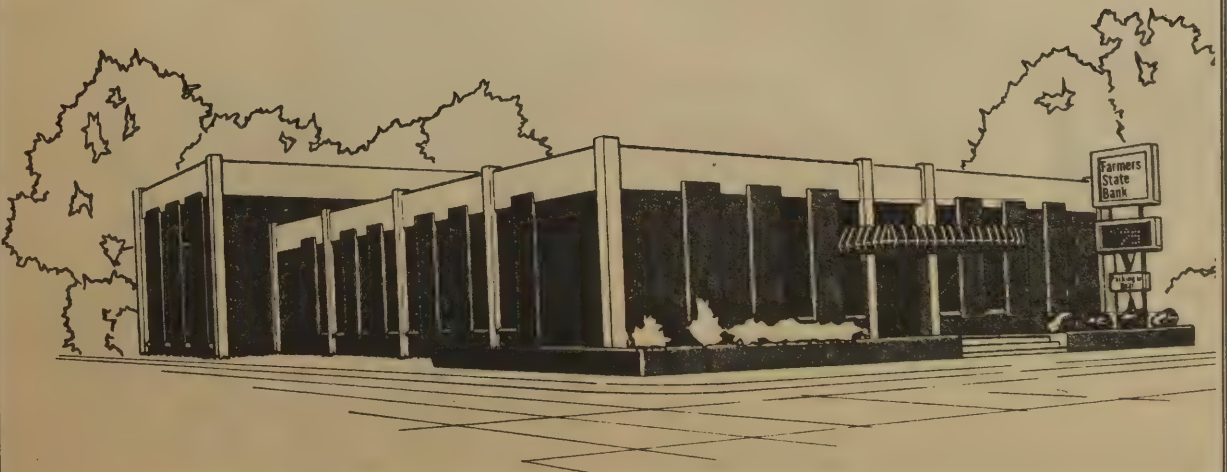
From our very beginning in Strohm in 1915 Farmers State Bank has been much more than just a building . . . it has been a place of service that helps people in matters of finance . . . a place where you can get straight talk about money matters . . . a place where you can get a smile or handshake. We think LaGrange County is a great place!!!



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The country chateau of the Marquis deLafayette—called LaGrange—is our county's namesake.

A few 'firsts' in LaGrange County

First Presbyterian preaching by Rev. Christopher Corey at Lima, 1832.

First Presbyterian church organized at Lima in 1833.

The first common school was taught by John B. Howe, in the fall of 1833, near Lima.

John B. Howe, first resident attorney, admitted to the bar in 1834.

First settlement in vicinity of Wolcottville in 1835.

First survey for railroad (Buffalo and Mississippi) in 1835.

First plat of town of LaGrange made in 1836.

First distillery near Lima in 1836.

First presidential election in county in 1836.

First election to take stock in railroad, the Buffalo and Mississippi, in 1838, carried.

First building for collegiate institute opened 1839.

First exciting political campaign in 1840.

The first newspaper (The LaGrange Freeman) in county, published at Ontario in 1842.

First court house erected at LaGrange in 1843.

The first and only removal of county seat, from Lima to LaGrange, in 1844.

The first and only Fourier organization in county, LaGrange Phalanx, in 1844.

The first teachers's institute in the state held in county at Ontario in 1846.

First normal school at Ontario, 1847.

First Odd Fellows' lodge in county, organized at Lima in 1848.

First Masonic lodges organized at Lima and LaGrange in 1849.

First introduction of Mulberry and locust trees in 1850.

First seminary at Wolcottville founded by Miss Susan Griggs in 1851.

First County Agricultural society organized October 1, 1852.

First county fair held at LaGrange in 1853.

First bank in county, opened at Lima, 1853.

First Ground broken for Grand Rapids and Indiana railroad, 1855.

Town of LaGrange first incorporated 1855.

First organization of "Regulators" for the suppression of house thieves in 1856.

First issue of **LaGRANGE STANDARD**, 1857.

First call for volunteers for suppression of the Rebellion, April 18, 1861.

First money order offices established in county, 1867.

First Decoration Day observance in county, 1868.

First opening of the Grand Rapids and Indiana railroad for business, 1870.

First telegraph line, (railroad) 1870.

First murder trial, that of Stephen A. Jenks for murder of George Mallow, in 1870.



The LaGrange Collegiate Institute before the 1965 Palm Sunday tornado destroyed it.



The Ontario Woolen Mills were a major source of employment.

Since 1856

Since 1875

**Reporting and recording the news
that affects people of
LaGrange County**

The **Standard**

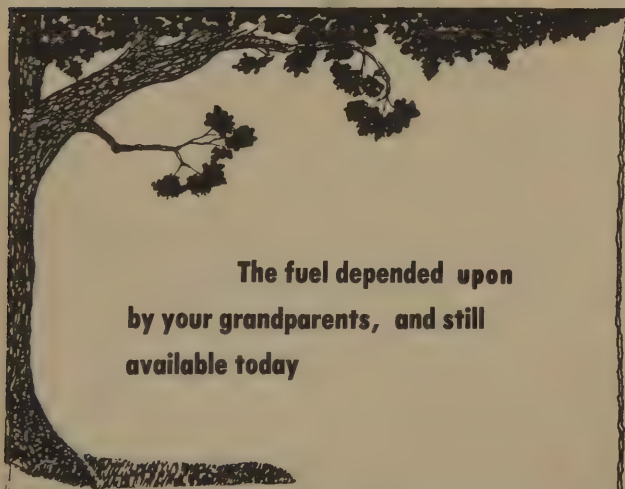
The La Grange **NEWS**

**Published by LaGrange Publishing Co., Inc.
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Early scenes of Mongo



Mongo's business district, showing the Olde Store, as it looked in the early 1900s.



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"For over forty years"

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West Side of Main Street, Mongo, Ind.



Mongo's west side of Main Street on a summer's day.

North Main Street, Mongo, Ind.



North Main in Mongo was a tree-lined avenue.



The village of Mongo, looking north down what is now Indiana 3, and in the lower photo, the Mongo Dam.

Mongo began as a rowdy, robust river settlement

Mongo, another of the earlier settlements in the county, began its existence as Union Mills.

It came to its present name by something of a devious route. Judge Seeley, was named postmaster of the original Mongoquionong (now the village of Howe), but was transferred, first to Greenfield Township, and in 1833 or 1834, to what is now Mongo.

At each transfer, he took the name of the post office with him and when he moved into Union Mills, he changed the name of the town to Mongoquionong - now shortened to Mongo.

Mongo was an early trading center with the Potawatomi Indians and a natural site for early white settlers to set up commercial operations. There was excellent water power from the Pigeon River and in 1831 a man by the name of L. K. Brownell began a dam and grist mill operation there.

Brownell saw the grist mill as something more than a place for farmers to grind corn and wheat for their needs. He erected a large distillery next to his mill. The encampment of Indians nearby was a ready market for his distillery and early farmers in the area could take their corn to the mill, get it ground, have it exchanged for whiskey or have his corn brewed for whiskey on shares.

The distillery was such a success, it is reported, that from 30 to 40 gallons of whiskey was produced and sold - each day.

Mongo began as one of the more promising communities of the county. There was the grist mill for the grinding of flour and cornmeal; there was an abundance of large and excellent fish in the mill pond; there was the wild game and the furs of all kinds brought in by the Indians and the white trappers and hunters.

A general store was soon erected (the

forerunner to the Olde Store) and a hotel was constructed in 1833. The village also had a blacksmith shop in 1833.

While the town was growing and a brisk trade with the Indians and the white settlers was developing, word reached the area of the Black Hawk Indian War to the west. The reports and rumors gave rise to some concern among the white settlers that the Potawatomi might become hostile.

(The Potawatomi clans in the area were, in fact, watching the war carefully, but as possible adversaries of the Indian tribes to the west, not the white settlers).

Still, three Mongo settlers, identified as Brownell the miller; John O'Ferrell, the storekeeper, and a French trader named Drurueaur, decided to have a little "fun" and stage a fake Indian attack on Mongo.

They had a couple of the Mongo residents dress in Indian regalia, war paint and all, and stage a fake massacre at the grist mill. One of the residents, a man named Langdon fled to Brushy Prairie to spread the news of the "massacre." Another, named Gage, flew to the north - Greenfield Township - with the report.

The result was the Gage and Langdon War - so called. About 100 white settlers in the Mongo area converged on the mill, muskets at the ready, to attack the Indian settlement. They found the Indians in their wigwags, but waving a white flag.

The people of Greenfield Township took a different view of the "emergency," however. They began the construction of a fort at the site of what is now Brighton. Another fort was started on an island in Cedar Lake.

In a day or two, however, the hoax became apparent, and the perpetrators became the object of the settlers' ire. Trade at the mill, the distillery and the general

store fell off to practically nothing. The French trader left town; the Irish storekeeper, likewise, and Brownell's mill was sold.

With things back to normal, more saw mills were erected in the Mongo area and one man, Samuel Bradford, put an addition on his mill for the carding of wool. Wool was taken to the carding mill, then taken home to be spun on the old spinning wheels, woven into cloth and returned to the mill to be dressed and colored.

In 1840, the presidential campaign of William Henry Harrison and "Tippecanoe

and Tyler, Too" struck Mongo with particular fervor. Bands on four-horse wagons from around the area were there, drums beating and colors flying.

It was, reported Weston A. Goodspeed, a local historian, a great day for the Whigs.

Early settlers predicted with confidence that if the town ever got a railroad, there would be no holding it back...with all of its water power and natural resources in the area.

Those early predictions never quite came true, despite the construction of the Valley Line Railroad through Mongo much later.



The Grubb Sanitarium in Mongo was one of the first hospital-like infirmaries in the area.

Valley Line makes its stop in an earlier Mongo

VALLEY LINE STATION - MONGO IND 1870



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J. Farver Lumber - about 1900
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LaGrange

Ontario—the dream that never came true

8-25-82, LaGrange, Ind.—Sesquicentennial-17

Ontario, conceived with the expectation of becoming the LaGrange county seat, became instead the seat of higher education in the rustic northwest frontier.

Nathan Jenks, Ontario County, New York, was the driving force behind both ventures. He migrated to the fledgling Indiana community in 1836 where he found a saw mill and grist mill operating on the banks of the Pigeon River and several small cabins in the area.

Convinced he had found the right place for a center of commerce and government for the newly-formed LaGrange County, he bought land on both sides of the river and had platted a community of 350 lots, including a public square which could serve as a courthouse square.

When the decision was made to move the county seat from Lima, Jenks made a convincing bid for Ontario as the new site for the county courthouse. It is said that the competition between Howe to keep the county seat - and Ontario as a logical place for the new county seat - became so fierce that a compromise was made - the location of the county seat in LaGrange.

Undaunted, Jenks built his own mill on the Pigeon River. It became one of the busiest in northern Indiana, turning out as much as 30,000 barrels of flour in a year.

In short order, a cooperage (barrel-making) industry, cabinet factory, tannery, boot factory, glove and mitten plant were established, the latter after James Scott, an English weaver, established the Ontario woolen mills, the largest industry in town.

Ontario became the northern terminal of the Lima Plank road, a commercial road of planks laid down between Fort Wayne and the LaGrange County Community. With its unfailing water power and developing commercial enterprises it looked as if the village would be the county's commercial center.

That dream was dealt a fatal blow, however, when the Grand Rapids Railroad was routed through LaGrange and Lima.

But Jenks had other ideas about the community on the banks of the Pigeon River. He saw the village as the site of a major co-educational institution. A blatant atheist who was "born again" under the tutelage of an early president of Oberlin (Ohio) College, he decided to found a similar institution of high education in Ontario.

With backing from interests in the East and the promise of funds from area residents, it was determined to erect a frame building, 50 by 60 feet, three stories in height for an institution of higher learning, patterned after Oberlin College.

In October, 1839, the institute was opened in which students from a wide area of the Midwest were offered a number of post-grade school courses, most of them preparing them as teachers.

Included in the educational program was a preparatory or academic, course, a collegiate program, a theological course and short course for persons advanced in life, or "in peculiar circumstances."

Though avoiding a denominational influence, the school's bylaws dictated that it "nevertheless should be decidedly Christian in character, exclusive of the demoralizing influences of pagan authors and sectarian principles; that it should foster free discussion and openly sustain the great moral enterprises of the day, such as revivals, temperance in all things, sanctification of the Sabbath, moral reform, Christian principles and human rights under whatever color or circumstances."

The establishment of the school brought not only students from a wide area of the frontier, but teachers of talent and integrity.

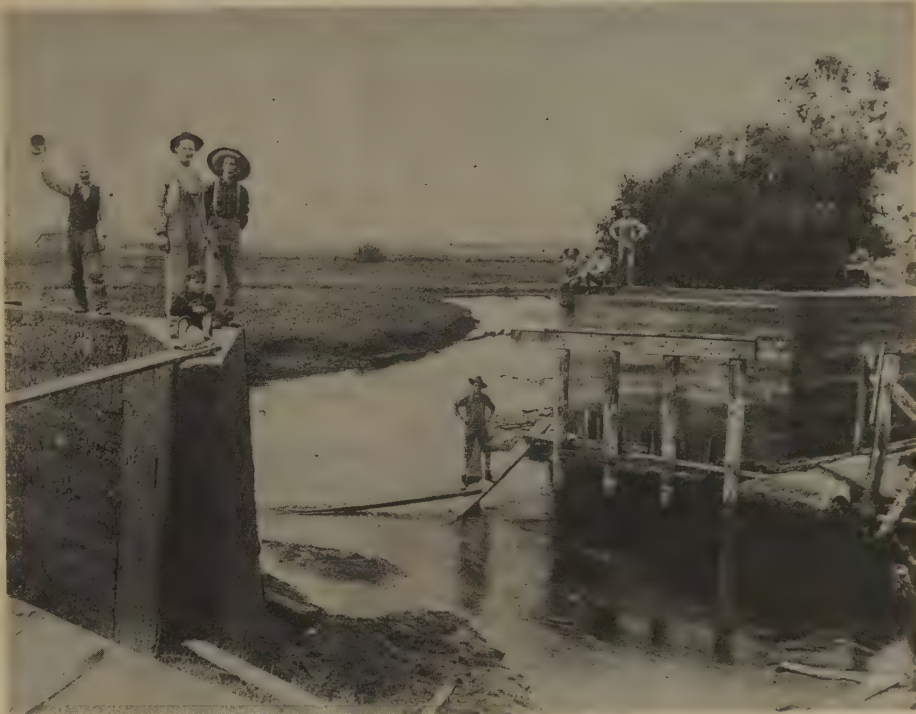
But, with the growing number of village high schools in the tri-county area; the influence of the school declined, and it was placed in receivership in 1881.

But the LaGrange Collegiate Institute had accomplished a most important mission - it had paved the way for co-education and other developments in higher learning.

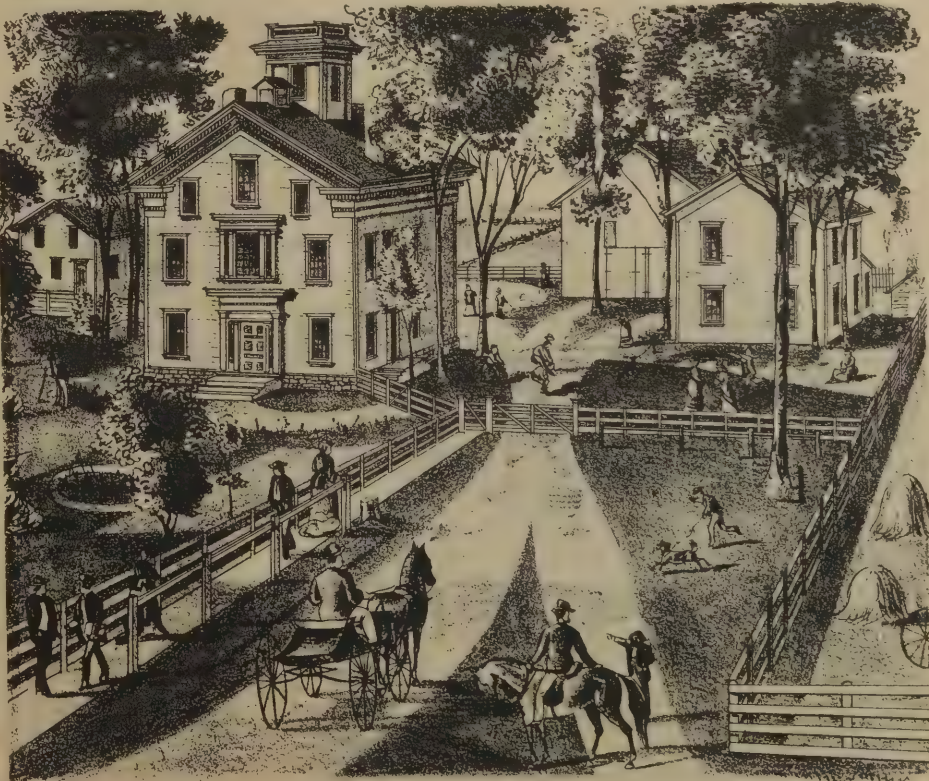
The stately old school building remained standing and abandoned at the south edge of Ontario for many years. Efforts were made to make the facility an historical site.

But the Palm Sunday tornado in 1965 wiped out those plans. The building was destroyed by the wind.

Ontario today is but a shell of what it once promised to be. But it can still lay claim to having helped pollinate the flower of modern American education.



The beginnings of a bridge over the Pigeon River near Ontario, with some of the men who worked on it.



LA GRANGE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE, Ontario, La Grange Co., Ind.

Incorporated 1840. Invested Capital, \$7,000. Endowment Fund, \$10,000. Rufus Patch, A.M. Principal; Mrs. Mary D. Patch and Mrs. Martha Doolittle, Assistants; Miss Mary Abbott, Teacher of Music. Tuition, per quarter of twelve weeks, \$5 to \$7; Music (piano or organ), twenty-four lessons, \$10—use of instrument \$3; Fall Term, of sixteen weeks, begins 1st Tuesday in September; Winter Term, of twelve weeks, begins the 1st Tuesday in January; Spring and Summer Term, of twelve weeks, begins the 2d Tuesday in April. Thirty ladies and gentlemen can be furnished with rooms and board at the Seminary, in connection with the family of the Principal. Room rent \$3 to \$4.50 per quarter. Board \$2.50 to \$2.75 per week.

Ontario's 1901 community band



Resplendent in their gold-braided uniforms, the Ontario village band poses for a formal photograph.



The Ontario School still looks much the same today.

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Post Offices

To the early settlers, the establishment of a Post Office in their area was an event of great importance. It meant that contact with others, through the mails, was close at hand, and it meant that their communities were officially recognized by the federal government.

Following is a list of Post Offices for LaGrange County communities—some of them no longer in existence:

Lima (now Howe)—Post Office established August 26, 1833.

LaGrange—Post Office established March 30, 1844.

Bloomfield (Plato)—Post Office established June 18, 1890.

Van Buren (Scott)—Post Office, November 21, 1837.

Mud Corners (Mt. Pisgah)—Post Office, January 14, 1848.

Ontario—Post Office in September, 1846.

Union Mills (Mingo)—Mingo Post Office Post Office June 25, 1832; Mingo Post Office February 25, 1874.

Applemanburg (Brushy Prairie)—Post Office, June 12, 1834.

Wolcott's Mills (Wolcottville)—Post Office, April 20, 1848, name changed July 24, 1864.

South Milford—Post Office, June 31, 1848.

Ringold—Post Office, July 11, 1846.

Fly Creek—Post Office, July 11, 1846.

Steno—Post Office, 1880.

Valentine—Post Office, 1869.

Hawpatch—Post Office, 1837, moved to Topeka 1893.

Pashan—Post Office, 1850.

Seybert Station—Post Office, 1889.

Shipshewana—Post Office, 1889.

Shore—Post Office in 1881.

Hayward—Post Office in 1899.

Stroh—Post Office in 1900.

Elmira—Post Office, 1899.

Eddy—Post Office, 1893.

Wright's Corners—Post Office, 1835, changed to Woodruff, 1880.

Lexington (Brighton)—Post Office, 1837.

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Registered Pharmacist

Indian Board of Pharmacy
● 1942 ●
FRED J. BROWN
Registered Pharmacist

Indiana Board of Pharmacy
● 1978 ●
JACOB S. BROWN
Registered Pharmacist

Indiana Board of Pharmacy
● 1981 ●
FRED J. BROWN
Registered Pharmacist

through the years

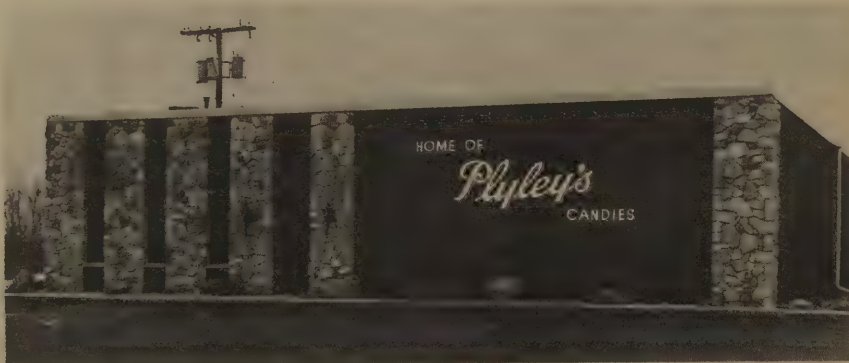
O
N
L
Y



1920's



1940's



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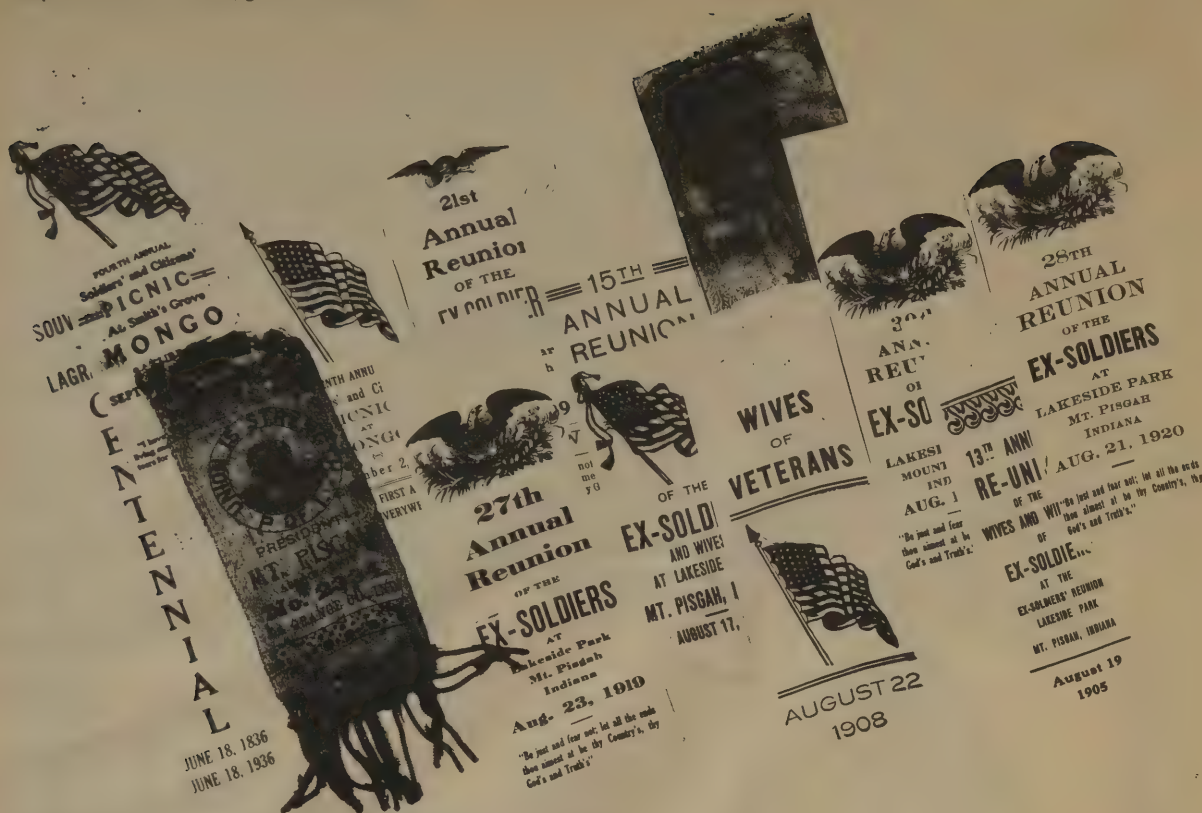
**LaGrange County's
150th year**



The County comes of age

Fall-1982

Compiled by
LaGrange Publishing Co., Inc.
LaGrange Standard-LaGrange News
The Countian



Fledgling county caught up in the Civil War

When the half-way mark of the 19th century rolled around, LaGrange County was still in its teens. Settlers continued to arrive, seeking land for farms.

We were yet to have a railroad. The roads to market places were little more than rutted Indiana trails. The rural areas were still dotted with log cabins.

It was a busy time, clearing land for new farms, expanding the older farm plots, and building new communities.

It also was a time of lawlessness. A loose confederacy of "blacklegs" - horse thieves, burglars, arsonists and counterfeiters - roamed the area at will. Until, that is, a number of community protection agencies, called regulators, put vigilante law into effect to track down, and sometimes administer their own brand of justice to the marauders.

The hanging of Gregory McDougal, one of the most notorious of the Blacklegs, helped to bring a halt to the "problem."

Then came the electrifying word that Fort Sumter had been fired upon by a newly-formed Confederate army and that the Southern States were seceding. A civil war was at hand.

This threat to the Nation's unity was unthinkable to the residents of LaGrange County, most of whom were first generation families of immigrants who had fled the wars and political persecutions of the Old World.

Although Indiana was an abolitionist state, it was perhaps not so much the injustice of slavery that roused the county as it was the fact the Southern States would dare to separate themselves from the Union.

And the county responded to President Lincoln's call after call for men to fill the ranks of the Union Army. Young men - not so young any more - hardened by what was still a frontier here marched off to the battlefields of the South and East. The tenacious soldiers from the farms of LaGrange County proved themselves in fight after fight with "Johnny Reb."

In fact, the 44th Brigade, made up of infantry companies from LaGrange, Steuben, Noble, DeKalb and Elkhart Counties, came to be known as the "Iron Brigade" for its refusal to quit in some of the bloodiest battles of that unfortunate war.

The announcement of the signing of a peace at Appomattox, Virginia, brought great - but short-lived - rejoicing in our county. Victory celebrations were stopped when word came of the assassination of President Lincoln.

Disease and battle wounds took a terrible toll on the 1,500 men the county sent off to war. Young men who marched away fired with the excitement of defending the Union came back sobered by the devastation they had seen, determined to pick up their lives as farmers, tradesmen and businessmen. For a time, there were no gala reunions of veterans. The war experiences burned painfully in many memories.

But veterans groups and GAR encampments were organized. The annual veterans' picnic at Mt. Pisgah became a major event in the county, and the "old boys" donned the Union Blue on occasion to march in parades.

After several false starts, LaGrange County finally got a railroad - the Grand Rapids and Indiana, running north and south through the county. Its routing through Wolcottville, LaGrange and Howe assured new growth in those communities and brought bitter disappointment to Ontario which had hoped first to become the county seat, then to be a railroad stop.

The railroad also meant that farmers would no longer have to haul their grain by wagon and team over miles of tortuous and sometimes impassable roads to shipping points in Fort Wayne, South Bend, or in Michigan.

The county was beginning to grow up. Local communities were expanding as demands for goods and services grew. The road system was gradually being converted from old Indian trails to graveled roadways where farm wagons were not so quickly mired in stretches of clay mud or wet sand.

And, in 1876, the Nation celebrated its centennial an occasion for a week-long celebration in Philadelphia, and for much "speechifying" by local orators. As the country headed into the Gay Nineties, a new optimism took hold. New labor-saving devices for farm and home were being made available. Spacious farms homes were replacing the log cabin homesteads. Gas Lights now illuminated some homes. There was talk of telephones and electric lights coming soon.

Memories of the Civil War were fading. The twentieth century promised even better times ahead.



1861

Seven Southern states form the Confederacy. The Civil War begins, and through the year, three Union army companies of LaGrange County men are formed and march off to staging and training areas in Fort Wayne and Indianapolis.

1862

Two more companies are organized in the LaGrange County for the Union forces. The first draft for the war also is held.

1863

Yet another company is organized in the LaGrange County. Residents are buoyed by news of a great Union victory at Gettysburg.

1864

Another business block fire at Lima, this time destroying the Lima Branch Bank. Lincoln again carries the county, and the Nation, in the presidential election. LaGrange County is asked to draft 191 men on the President's call for 300,000 more soldiers.

1865

The county's great rejoicing over General Lee's surrender at Appomattox, Virginia, turns to intense grief a short time later when it is learned that Lincoln has been assassinated. The National State Bank at Lima is formed.

1866

Civil War veterans held a camp near LaGrange for two days to reflect on their war experiences. It is the year that the Ku Klux Klan is formed. A tornado sweeps through the northwestern part of the county.

1867

Pigeon River dam at Ontario breaks. Work begins on the GR&I railroad. Baseball fever hits LaGrange County. U.S. buys Alaska from Russia.

1868

Decoration Day is first observed in LaGrange.

1869

Summer-like weather in January in the county. Six LaGrange business buildings destroyed in a fire. It is the year a trans-continental rail line is completed with a ceremony at Promontory Point, Utah.

1870

The GR&I rail line is completed to LaGrange from the north. The population of LaGrange County is 14,123.

1871

An ice storm does immense damage to trees and shrubs in the county. Dr. David Rogers, who settled in Clearspring Township in 1833, died, leaving his property for the benefit of orphans. "The LaGrange Independent" is published. It is the year of the great Chicago fire.

1872

The county is shocked when three women attempt to vote in the presidential election, which U. S. Grant wins locally. The "epizooty" hits great numbers of horses in LaGrange County.

Looking back through the years

1873

Heavy snow blocks all the roads in northern Indiana. Kerr's flour mill, LaGrange, burns.

A wool growers association is formed in the county.

LaGrange Protective Agency is formed as concern grows about numerous burglaries and increasing number of tramps.

The Grange is organized in the county. The first postal card makes its appearance.

1874

The name of Mongoquining is changed to Mongo.

LaGrange votes in favor of erecting a brick schoolhouse.

In July, gardens and fruits suffer from a severe frost.

In our neighboring state, the first Kentucky Derby is held.

1875

Even the railroads are stopped by a February blizzard.

Saloons are opened in LaGrange and Work begins on the new LaGrange School as the Lima School Building is completed.

LaGrange prepares for the Nation's Centennial Year with a number of tea parties.

1876

The Centennial Year is ushered in by a midnight celebration in LaGrange.

Several citizens leave for the Black Hills where a gold rush is on.

Commissioners grant licenses to liquor saloons.

Residents read of Col. George A. Custer and 264 soldiers of the 7th Cavalry being killed in the Battle of the Little Big Horn in Montana.

Mark Twain's "Tom Sawyer" is published.

1877

Brown's Hotel in LaGrange is burned.

1878

The corner of the new LaGrange County Courthouse is laid.

1879

Silver dollars come into use.

LaGrange County Democrat is established.

County offices moved into new courthouse.

Sycamore Hall is built at what was then called Hawpatch.

F. W. Woolworth opened his first five and dime store in New York.

1880

Talk is renewed over the promotion of a narrow gauge railroad in the county.

1881

The Sargent or Lake Shore Railroad survey made through LaGrange.

Floods reported in February.

A great comet attracts much attention, excitement in the county.

Memorial services were held for President Garfield who was fatally wounded by an assassin in Washington.

Potato crop is short. Potatoes are imported from Scotland for local markets.

1882

County farm, west of LaGrange, is purchased for \$7,500. Contract let for building the County Infirmary.

Semi-centennial is celebrated at Lima.

A comet appears near the sun.

A local post of the G.A.R. is established.

1883

John B. Howe, community leader, legislator and businessman dies at Lima.

A May tornado sweeps through the county, killing one, and inflicting \$100,000 in damages.

Purchase begins for the Wabash Railroad extension through LaGrange County.

Standard Railroad Time is introduced in the county.

The Shore General Store burns after powder stored in the building blows up.

1884

Year begins with cold snap-20 degrees below zero.

Commissioners refuse liquor licenses in LaGrange and there is prohibition for less quantities than a quart until September. Later, liquor license trial reverses the decision of the commissioners.

Fly Creek ditched in LaGrange.

A "gentle" earthquake is felt in LaGrange.

1885

In February, the county is snowbound and shivering in an extreme cold snap. Cold continues through March.

The LaGrange Sentinel is established.

Memorial services are held for General Grant.

Street lamps are erected in LaGrange. Rurick's Opera House is completed.

1886

Weather flags are displayed at The LaGrange Standard building.

Roller skating craze hits LaGrange.

A heavy snow storm hits the county April 6.

Home building boom in LaGrange.

Knights of Pythias are organized at LaGrange.

Electrical storms sweep the county in September.

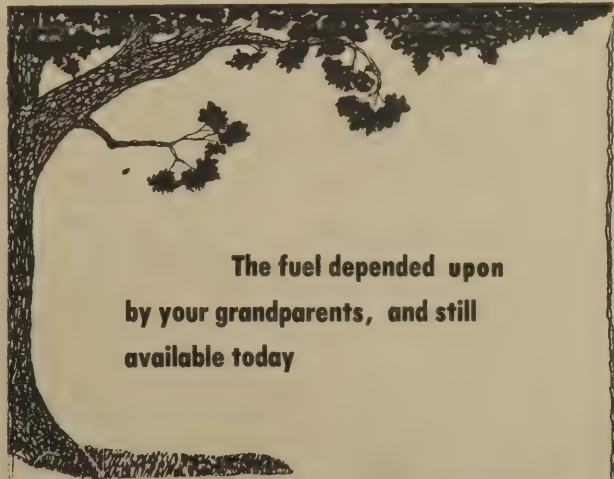
C. S. Griffith builds a telegraph line to Middlebury.

Residents read that Geronimo, the Apache chief, surrenders.

1887

Another cold January, temperature hits -16 degrees.

(Continued on page 4)



The fuel depended upon
by your grandparents, and still
available today

Skelgas

...for farm, home, business, motor fuel

"For over forty years"

SHIPSHEWANA SKELGAS SERVICE
State Road 5 North - Shipshewana, Indiana

1891

1892

189:3

1894

Thomas Edison invents the first kineto-

1895

1896

1897

1898

maining two, just phone 403-2100.

1899

1900

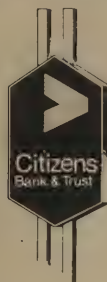
LaGrange.

1901

Readers are shocked by the assassination of President McKinley.

1902

The Goshen and Angola Electric Railroad advertises for 1,000 men and 250 teams, but still no work is done.



**The newest
banking sign
in LaGrange
County.....**

*We are proud to be a part of
the community and pride our
selves on being progressive.*

**Citizens
Bank & Trust
La Grange, Ind.**



*Cider mill just south of LaGrange
was a popular place in early days*



Veterans of the Indiana 12th Cavalry pose during a reunion in Angola.

County's young men march off to face 'Johnny Reb'

April, 1861 was a busy time in the county. Farmers were plowing or pulling stumps, after the ground had thawed. It was the beginning of another growing season.

But there were troublesome reports reaching the county - reports that seven southern states had seceded from the Union and had formed the Confederate States of America. Then came word that the Union Fort of Sumter, South Carolina, had been fired upon, then captured, by the rebels.

"Treason, unblushing treason, is abroad in the land," wrote one local resident in an article in the Standard.

By mid-April, President Lincoln had called 75,000 volunteers for the Union Army. The next day, Indiana Governor Oliver Morton called for six regiments in Indiana troops, the quota for the state.

Meetings Called

The first paper published in LaGrange after all of this distressing news called for a

public meeting at the courthouse to organize a company of county men.

But a packed courtroom heard only patriotic speeches and the presentation of a resolution to support the Union. Similar meetings were held in Lima and in South Milford in the days that followed.

On May 4, another meeting was held in LaGrange at which the audience approved a resolution that the county should pay the expenses of volunteers while they formed into a company here and began training for combat.

For 90 Days' Service

A list of volunteers - enough to form a company was soon completed and given the title of "The LaGrange Tigers." About two weeks later word came from the State for the company to proceed to Indianapolis. Amidst great fanfare the unit marched to Surgis to be taken by train to the state capital.

Once there, however, they found the state's quota filled and were told to return home. About 30 men joined other units who needed volunteers to fill their ranks; the others returned home.

New Company Formed

Captain William Roy, who had helped form and train the "Tigers", returned home to enlist a three-year's service company. With the original volunteers and new recruits, the company was mustered in as Company A, 21st Indiana Regiment.

They had barely marched away when a new company was started, this one quartered in Lima, under the direction of Captain William Dawson. This unit became Company G of the 30th Indiana Regiment.

The formation of that company had not yet been completed when yet another began to form under Captain William B. Bingham in LaGrange. That unit marched away to Fort Wayne for mustering in as Company H of the 44th Indiana Infantry Brigade.

It wasn't until the following year, July, 1862, that another call for troops was made for a company from the congressional district in which LaGrange County was situated, to be a part of Indiana's 74th Regiment. There was at the same time, a recruiting drive in the county for members of the Indiana 12th Cavalry. These efforts culminated, as the Standard reported on August 18, 1862:

"One hundred and 22 cheers and a tiger for Old LaGrange. LaGrange has her company now full and will start today for the rendezvous at Fort Wayne. Last Thursday, she sent 17 men to join the cavalry at the same place, making in all 122 men!"

Captain of the infantry company was Jo Rawson Webster, and the unit was made Company G of the 88th Regiment, instead.

About the same time, Harley Crocker received a commission to organize yet another company in the county. It was shortly completed and mustered in as Company C of the 100th Indiana Regiment.

Draft Initiated

August, 1862 also brought word that President Lincoln was calling for 300,000 more men and that in Indiana a draft was being constituted to help raise the state's quota. The following month the state draft commission said the following numbers of men would be needed from each township: Clearspring, 8; Milford, 7; Eden, 9; Van Buren, 22 total 46. Thirty-one men were subsequently drafted, most of them going into the 30th regiment.

Two more draft enrollments were made in the county in 1864 with quotas of 713 and 491.

There was little volunteering in the summer of 1864, although a number of men were recruited for the Seventh Cavalry - which would be annihilated in 1876 at the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

Yet another company was raised in the early months of 1865, this one under Captain John H. Catoon. It saw limited action, however, since the peace was signed in April of that year.

1,500 Men

In all, LaGrange County sent more than 1,500 men off to the Civil War and most of them were involved in some of the bloodiest battles of that conflict. County men saw action in the campaigns in East Maryland and Virginia, New Orleans, Baton Rouge, West Louisiana, the Gulf Coast, Kentucky, Tennessee, the Siege of Corinth, the pursuit of General Bragg, Rosencran's Campaign against Atlanta, Texas, and Sherman's march to the sea.

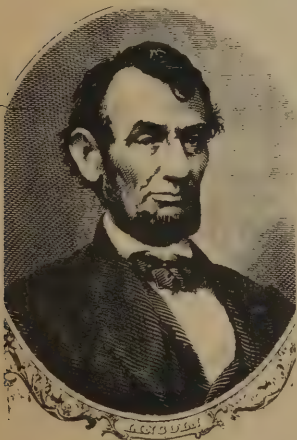
A quick perusal of the 1882 history of LaGrange County, Indiana, published by the F. A. Battey and Company Publishers of Chicago, showed some 220 LaGrange County men killed or fatally wounded in action or dead from disease. Many more died from wounds or disease immediately after the war.

During the war years, the county gave some \$40,000 for the relief of soldiers' families and paid out some \$42,000 in bounties as enlistment inducements. Townships also paid bounties and relief to their residents. The total was estimated to be \$213,061.

For a small, yet "backwoods" county, we paid a considerable price for a war which most of our residents found hard to comprehend.



Charley Heign strikes a formal pose as a Civil War sergeant



Abraham Lincoln's assassination stunned the county as residents were celebrating the end of the Civil War

County 'Regulators' tame 'Blacklegs'

LaGrange County was in its infancy when a group of mauraders called "The blacklegs" began moving through the county on periodic raids to steal horses, rob farm families at gun-point, confiscate peddlers' wagons - in short taking about anything of value they could find.

Often as not, the settlers' homes and barns were burned as a farewell touch to their raids.

Early farmers were easy prey for the blacklegs. Most farmsteads were in woods opening, isolated from other farms. Roads and trails bordered by high weeds and undergrowth made "getaways" easy. And it would take at least a day's journey to notify authorities.

While the headquarters of this loose confederacy of thugs was situated in northern Noble County, their activities ranged over a wide area locally. They also were in the counterfeiting business, minting false coins and printing bogus bills.

At the height of their activities, farmers hardly knew if they were receiving legitimate money or bogus cash for their goods and services. There developed also a large network of so-called honest farmers and tradesmen who were willing to deal in counterfeit cash for a profit.

Things got so bad that any man identifying himself as a Hoosier from northern Indiana was regarded with suspicion wherever he traveled.

Help from the Legislature

The State Legislature of 1852 reacted to the area's growing notoriety by passing a law authorizing the formation of local protection companies with all the rights of constables in the detection and apprehension of criminals.

It wasn't until some four years later, however, that the first such unit was formed - "The LaGrange County Rangers," 31 members strong dedicated to the protection

of Milford, Bloomfield, Springfield and Johnson Townships.

In short order, 14 more such companies were formed in the county. They included:

The Greenfield Horse Thief Detecting Society, 32 members.

Mutual Protection Company of Lima, 64 members.

Self-Protectors of South Milford, 20 members.

LaGrange Self-Protection Association, 20 members.

Self Protection Society of Clearspring, 19 members.

Self Protectors of Springfield, 35 members.

LaGrange Independent Police (Johnson, Clearspring, Bloomfield Townships), 58 members.

Independent Protectors of Wright's Corner, 21 members.

Self Protectors of LaGrange and Noble Counties, 15 members.

Eden Self Protecting Association, 19 members.

Brushy Prairie Regulators, 20 members.

Lima Regulators, 37 members.

Mutual Protectors of Van Buren Township, 40 members.

Clearspring Self-Protecting Association, 25 members.

Any person seeking membership in the association was required to have an untarnished background and to make a solemn pledge to secrecy of membership and activities.

Public Display

In the autumn of 1857, the regulators decided a public display of their strength was called for, and 300 men on horseback staged a parade through the streets of Kendallville then held an open meeting on a church lawn pledging to wipe out the blacklegs in the area.

The following day, a posse of regulators

from Ligonier rode into the "Tamaracks," a known forest hideaway for the most notorious of the Blacklegs, and arrested 14 men they found there.

Among those arrested was Gregory McDougal, reputed to be the most notorious of all. He had publicly boasted of stealing 34 horses in less than a year; robbing four stores and two tanneries; stealing the goods of two peddlers, taking a large number of harnesses, saddles, buggies and other property.

While in jail at Ligonier, he added to his unsavory reputation that he feared neither God nor the devil.

But unknown to McDougal, a U.S. Marshal had been brought to Ligonier to testify that McDougal had killed a jailer's wife in Canada to free his brother from confinement. Other witnesses - cohorts of McDougal who had been caught in the raid - came forth to accuse him of murdering a school teacher in Canada, and of setting fire to an old Scotsman in that country to compel him to hand over all his money.

Found Guilty

A hearing committee of regulators had heard enough. They sentenced McDougal to die by hanging at noon, January 26, 1858. On that day, he was placed in a wagon which also contained his coffin, driven to Diamond Lake in Noble County and hanged from a tree there.

Most of the other men rounded up in the raid were given jail sentences. Soon county jails in the area were filled with blackleg suspects rounded up by the regulators. But it was the hanging of McDougal which broke the back of the system of lawlessness in the area. Those who weren't caught in regulator raids scattered in all directions.

The rightness of the vigilante law which executed McDougal has been debated for years since.



The bank in 1873

*The deep imprint of the character and policies
of founders John B. Howe and Samuel P. Williams is as
sound a business practice today as it was in 1853*

*We were a good place to bank in 1853...
and are just as good today*

*Now celebrating one hundred twenty-nine years
of reputable service to the people of LaGrange County*

"The Friendly Bank"

State Bank of Lima

Howe, Indiana

Member
Federal Reserve System

Member
F.D.I.C.



"The Boys in Blue" pick Mt. Pisgah for their annual reunion picnic

by Marguerite Forst

I have been asked to tell something about the picnics that were held for some thirty years at Lakeside Park at Mt. Pisgah. I hardly know where to begin and once I get started there are so many stories connected with these picnics that I shall hardly know when to stop. So get yourselves comfortably located in your chair.

As you all know the Civil War came to a close in 1865. Our boys came home tired and worn out with tramping for miles over high land or marsh, wading streams, foraging for food, cooking over camp fires, trying to aid the sick or wounded and all the other horrors of War.

For a few years, they were content to rest and try to forget the nightmares of the past. Gradually, they began to think of their comrades and a longing crept into their hearts to meet with their old buddies and talk over old experiences. They tell us that reunions were held from time to time in various places. They met at South Milford, Salem, Wolcottville and at LaGrange. No records were kept of these meetings.

The History book tells us that the Soldiers and Sailors Reunion Association was organized August 11, 1894. However, the badges that we have show that they held picnics at Lakeside Park as early as 1892.

'Tis said the boys inquired around for a suitable place to hold an annual picnic. From all the places offered, they selected the grove a half mile east of the Mt. Pisgah store as the most desirable location.

The land belonged to Andrew Forst. He and his family helped the boys clear out the underbrush, rake leaves and get the place ready to accommodate a crowd.

At a meeting, a suggestion was made that since this grove was to be a permanent meeting place, it should have a name. Several names were presented but because of the proximity to Little Turkey Lake, they decided the name should be "Lakeside Park".

The men who originally organized the association were: John M. Caton, Robert Pierce, M. C. Butler, John Groosbeck, Elijah Forbestland, Daniel Rassler, Ralph Ashley is mentioned later. With the exceptions of Mr. Butler, I know these men well. Mr. Caton came to the Mt. Pisgah area in 1882 and built a lovely brick home south of the store about half mile. He had a blacksmith shop and many a time we children on our way home from school, stopped to watch the sparks fly from the forge. Mr. Pierce was a neighbor also. He was the father of Jessie Pierce who taught at the Mt. Pisgah school for several years. Mr. Groosbeck was the whitest white man I ever saw. I did not meet him until his hair and beard were snow white. He was a chaplain and always lived the part well. I never met Mr. Butler but I read his book that tells of the life of a soldier during the Civil War. Mr. Rasler was my grandfather who spoiled us all by doing so many nice things for us. Mr. Ashley was also connected with the Mt. Pisgah store. He was its first secretary. Mr. Forbes was also a close neighbor and at one of the reunions, they staged a sham battle. The boys in blue were on one side of a hill and the boys in gray on the other side. They had procured an old cannon and when Mr. Forbes attempted to light it, it back-fired and shattered one hand. He had lived thru Gettysburg - gone with Sherman to the sea - came home without a scratch only to lose a hand in a sham battle.

During the middle of July each summer the boys met to plan for the picnic. These meetings were well attended and much interest was shown. The work was divided so that no one had much to do.

When the big day arrived, there were baby racks, cane racks, and places to buy ice-cream, candy, pop corn and all the indigestible things that go along with a picnic.

Fred Brady was always on hand to make taffy. He had a large hook fastened up above his head over which he looped the taffy - time and time again until it was white as

snow and the best taffy candy you ever tasted. In those days, a nickel bought a big chunk.

The merry-go-round was set up the day before the picnic. One side of the round platform that held the wooden ponies and sleds could be lowered so that a real horse could be taken across that platform and hitched to something that pulled the merry-go-round around. They would have to change horses several times during the day.

A speaker's stand was built toward the east side of the grove. The east, north and south sides were open but the back side was closed about half way up. Under the eaves on the east side facing the benches where the audience sat, were the figures 1860-1865. On the north side, was the word "Welcome". This building was painted in red, white and blue stripes. Benches were placed on the platform where the old soldiers sat. An organ was borrowed from the Lake Bethel church for the day.

A short way to the south from the speaker's stand, a six-sided building was built especially for the band. No picnic was complete without a good band. Another building was built that had a counter or table built out around the front of it. All kinds of knick-knacks, pop, candy, balloons and ice cream were sold there.

A driven well furnished water for the thirsty. Two tin cups dangled on a wire from the pump's spout. We all drank out of the same cups and lived to tell the tale.

Oh yes - two little buildings stood over in the southeast corner of the grove. By evening, there were well worn paths leading to each one.

Picnic Day was a grand event, not only for the local neighborhood but for the whole county. Aside from the annual Corn School, it was considered the biggest event in the county.

By seven o'clock in the morning, the roads from the east and from the west were filled with wagons and buggies winding their way toward the picnic ground. There was ample room in the grove across the road from the picnic area for the wagons, buggies and horses.

The program usually began at 10 o'clock. During the early years, while the boys were still quite physically "fit", they assembled at the main entrance to the grove where they lined up two and two with the band leading, they marched to the speaker's stand to take their seats.

Picnic Tales as told by Arthur Scott and published in the LaGrange Standard.

The Ontario band furnished music for the picnic several times. So did the Mongo band, and others. He thinks the last band to play was the Howe town band which contained some of the original Ontario players. (Music was also furnished by a Brighton band, Flint and a band from Stroh).

A few persons in the old band were: Carl Willard, Alfred Hart, Ed Mosier, and Walt DeMond who were sons of veterans. Ross Parish was a grandson. Bud Mann and the Scott boys were nephews of old soldiers.

About 1896 or 7, Clark Brock, a school teacher and a professional cornetist came to the Lewis home to spend the summer. He had led a show band in earlier years and had possession of some good band music. He taught the boys that summer. The Mt. Pisgah picnic was the last engagement before school started. The boys had built a band wagon. They took a heavy wagon, got a set of bolster springs, put a tight bottomed hay rack on the springs, then arranged two rows of seats from end to end which were covered with old church cushions. They used four horses to draw the wagon.

The Smeltzly girls, the Scott girls, Mable Davidson and Stella Hart helped at decorations for socials, etc. so turned out and made red, white and blue plumes to put on the horses' heads. They trimmed the wagon as you would a float for Corn School.

They gave royal greetings to people as they passed the houses along the way -

especially any pretty girl. They joshed those who passed by them in buggies and cursed some as smart-alecks who passed by in a flurry leaving a cloud of dust.

On picnic day, it rained. They gathered up all the oil cloths, rain coats, and umbrellas they could muster and set out. They stopped at Garlets store in Mongo, not knowing whether to go on or not. Their instruments had been placed in a surrey so they would not get wet. Finally all climbed into the wagon again and set out. The two rows of riders sat back to back.

More rain came, water from your umbrella running down your neighbor's back.

The rain had subsided somewhat by the time they reached the grounds. Capt. Caton was there to greet them along with several other old soldiers.

The shelter house faced east. This was the speaker's stand and had benches for the old boys to sit on. The band stand was just south of the speaker's stand. (It was six-sided and had a row of seats running clear around on the inside for the players to sit on).

The band played a couple numbers to assemble the crowd and also during the program.

John Hawk was leader of the Mongo band. Some Brighton boys were in the band, also. Walter Crandall played clarinet; Harry Heign and Weldon Secrist, cornets; Jacob Arnold tuba; Andrew Krauschaar, baritone. Arthur Scott, Walt DeMond, Harvey Keys and others were in this band.

(Probably the band that played at the last picnic in 1922 was one from Howe. Howe had celebrated a Homecoming and had gotten together a band with players from Howe, Pretty Prairie and Ontario under the leadership of Sam Gilbert). The band played a medley of Stephen Foster melodies including "Dixie". The selection was well played but was not appreciated by the ex-soldiers. Mr. Frank Duntan, the main speaker of the day, admonished the band boys - "Never play Dixie to a group of ex-soldiers from the North". The band marched on to their own seats.

The speaker's stand and the band stand were gayly decorated with bunting and flags. One large flag, with the golden eagle on top, stood out from all the rest.

In the minutes of a meeting in 1899, I find that a choir from Salem sang several numbers. Prayer was offered by Comrade John Groosbeck. Elder Bumpus gave the welcome address and a response was given by Rev. Stillwell of LaGrange. The meeting was then dismissed for dinner.

Some families placed the seats together to form a table and ate in front of the speaker's stand. Some spread their dinners on the ground and ate from the ground. Others bought dinners that were served by a church group.

At one o'clock, the grown ups assembled again for the afternoon program. There were recitations, songs, short speeches and often a drill put on by the neighborhood children. The children were rewarded by a free ride on the merry-go-round or a dish of ice-cream.

In the afternoon, an address was the main feature of the program. Among the notables who gave addresses upon various dates

were: Hon. John W. Hanan; Judge Powers of Angola; Hon. N. W. Gilbert; Hon. O. L. Ballou; Hon. C. C. Gillams; Hon. James Watson; Vermont Finley and many others.

At one of the picnics, a colored man spoke who had been a slave. I quote from his speech: "You folks who have always been free cannot understand what it means to be a slave - knowing that any day your master had the right to sell you away from your family or to sell a son or your wife like cattle or pigs. Neither can you fathom the joy we experienced when we were told that we were really free."

At the close of the day, when most of the folks had gone home, the boys ate supper from their baskets, then built a huge bonfire around which they sat to sing old camp-fire songs and swap stories of their army days.

Among the records of this association, I found the following resolution which had been written by Comrade Elijah Forbes who braved the battles at Gettysburg and marched with Sherman to the sea.

Lakeside Park, Indiana
August 16, 1913

The 21st meeting of the ex-soldiers picnic association.

Inasmuch as the management of this association be getting well on in years and that these annual meetings will soon cease, we beg to offer at this meeting the following resolution:

Be it declared that in the event of these annual meetings ceasing to be kept up, that the records of said Mount Pisgah Ex-soldiers Picnic Association consisting of Secretary's book, Treasurer's Book, Flags, Bunting, and all decorating material and all finance of said association shall become the property of the J. H. Dancer Grand Army Post No. 104 at LaGrange, Indiana. We further ask that the resolution be read and action taken at this meeting by a vote of yeas and nays, and that the result of such vote be put upon the records of this meeting.

(Signed) E. H. Forbes

The resolution was adopted. However, by the time the picnics folded up there was no Grand Army organization either. The American Legion at LaGrange was contacted and they agreed to accept the old flag that had flown at every reunion of the ex-soldiers. My mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Belden Sadler, my uncle Gilbert Rasler and a neighbor, Elmer Forbes, attended a meeting of the American Legion and presented the flag to them, and I quote from the presentation speech made by my mother: "We, the children of the boys in blue who fought so valiantly in the Civil War to insure Freedom for all, proudly present this flag to the boys in khaki who fought just as valiantly during the Great World War for Peace."

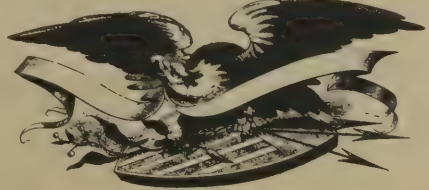
Among the minutes of these meetings I found these few lines with which I will close my story:

Your arms are grounded and your ranks are broken

"The brazen bugle sounds the charge no more

We're waiting orders till the word is spoken

To join our comrades on the other shore.





County's Civil War vets at an early picnic at Mt. Pisgah.

SINCE 1896



Customers expected a well stocked pharmacy and sundry store in 1896, and Brown's provided it to them. Eighty-six years later Brown's remains the store to rely upon.

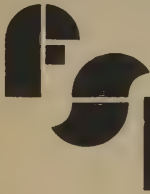
Professional, personal and friendly service attributes of a quality business since 1896.

Brown's Drug Store

Pharmacy • Cosmetics • Cards • Candies • Convalescent Aids • Electronics

LaGrange, Indiana

COME GROW WITH US



FARMERS STATE BANK

LaGrange, Indiana

Branches in Stroh, Topeka, Wolcottville

Member F.D.I.C.

Member F.D.I.C.



December 31, 1915

\$53,131

December 31, 1920

\$227,449

December 31, 1925

\$272,167

December 31, 1930

\$193,712

December 31, 1935

\$631,846

December 31, 1940

\$1,243,294

December 31, 1945

\$4,663,484

December 31, 1950

\$5,418,917

December 31, 1955

\$8,057,453

December 31, 1960

\$10,391,067

December 31, 1965

\$14,795,274

December 31, 1970

\$23,048,663

December 31, 1975

\$36,242,409

December 31, 1980

\$60,371,819

June 30, 1982

\$70,406,036

Current Average

\$71,500,000

Glimmerings of women's rights were evident in the early years



The stirrings of women's rights were evident in 1876, the year of our country's centennial.

The following article appeared in one of the centennial editions of The Standard:

By L.B. Collett

History bears record to the worth, self-sacrifice, determination, courage, and patriotism of the women of the revolutionary war, who so effectually aided in the struggle for independence, encouraged and upheld the tired hands and sinking hearts of husbands and brothers, when weak and faint from hunger, disappointment, and defeat.

It is said that human nature is the same in all ages, and that the traits of ancestors are transmitted (modified perhaps, by habits of education) to their descendants, although one or two generations may have intervened, the qualities in question having lain dormant through non-use, but reviving in their original intensity when need demands.

The women of our county are no exception to the general rule, but are every whit as sacrificing, as courageous, as determined and patriotic, as were the noble women of 1776.

Nor is it along, amid scenes of carnage, and violent death, that the courage and endurance of women is most worthily tested, but in years of continuous hardships, in days and nights of uninterrupted toil and privations, such as falls to the lot of the pioneer women of new and unsettled countries.

In 1828 the first settlement of LaGrange county took place, and the names of the first settlers recorded, but of the wives and sisters of these men no mention is made, yet their presence is a well attested fact. Trials, great as those borne by the women of 1776, were the portion of those who had left home and kindred to brave the perils of the wilderness, surrounded by teachurious Indians, whom to know is to fear, the comforts and appliances of life left behind with the old home; the log cabin, rough stools, hewn tables, improvised bedsteads and puncheon floor, so horribly unlike aught of former days, no matter how well concealed, the hearts of these women must at times have ached with home sickness, and longing for the sight of old familiar faces. With circumscribed diet, with no society, save their own, and hardly any communication with the great world from which they had exiled themselves, to maintain a cheerful exterior (as the old settlers declare was the case,) to be ever ready with pleasant words and kind deeds, must have required a higher degree of mental and moral courage, than in these days of rapid communication, social advantages and comforts seem possible.

The spinning wheel and loom furnished the wardrobe of the family, the children drew out their a-b's, for the mothers hearing, to the whirr of the fast turning wheel, or heavy thud of the loom, conning aloud from the book of knowledge (the speller so woefully neglected in the present day) the lessons upon which depended their future education.

As soon as circumstances would admit, school houses were built and young women installed therein as mistresses, to whom thronged eager children, impatient to climb

the rounds of the ladder of learning, the more anxious and eager because the session was short and their advantages few.

With the passage of time, came more liberal opportunities and a higher grade of schools, than was possible while the settlements were new and thinly populated. The women of LaGrange county deserve great honor as educators. Without waiting until a college could be erected and endowed, they set quietly to work with the little ones, ably seconding the efforts of the toiling, weary mothers, laying patiently the foundation on which the super-structure should afterward be reared, and under better auspices. Prominent among the educators of the county to whom the present men and women of to-day are greatly, yea unspeakably indebted are Miss Susan Gregg, the preceptress for a score or more of years of the Wolcottville Seminary, Mrs. Laura Butler of LaGrange, Miss Flanders, Miss Dimond and others of whom time and space forbids mention.

To no man, or set of men in the county, is the generation now filling different positions of honor and trust in LaGrange county, exclusively indebted for educational training, for the honor equally belongs to the modest unassuming women who gave all, demanding naught in return, save a living. "Honor to whom honor belongs," is a safe and eminently just motto, and to none of the teachers of twenty years ago can juster meed of praise be given.

Even as the pioneer women of our county followed in the footsteps of the wives, sisters and daughters of the pilgrim fathers, so also in the hour of trial, when war, and alas, civil war and treason was abroad in the land, the women of the county, at large proved themselves worthy of the women of 1776. Resolutely brothers, sons and husbands were girded for the fight and sent forth with many a blessing to battle in the cause of right.

The history of the women of the revolutionary war, was re-enacted by the women of 1862, and though many sad hearts grew heavy with hope deferred, and mourning for those who would never return, none asked for peace at the sacrifice of the Union.

We often hear the degeneracy of the nineteenth century mournfully dilated upon, but we fancy it exists more in the morbid imagination than elsewhere, for take any writer of past time, and the same thought is as dolefully and forcibly expressed. The golden age in misanthropic minds; is always past; the present nor the future can possibly possess aught good or true, and yet when prompt energetic measures are demanded, the age is ready, thoroughly and competently to supply the demand.

The women of LaGrange County are cultivated and intelligent people, whose principal avocations are those of housekeepers and home makers.

Possessing no large cities, no manufacturing towns, art galleries, universities, nor aught that tends to magnify or exalt the ornamental accomplishments of ultra refined life at the expense of the practical and noble common place, we yet assert a proprietorship in the representative women of America. As printers, women are conceded to the equal to men, and we point with pride to the fact that a woman published the first daily newspaper in the English language; as artists, as speakers, as preachers, as authors, as lawyers and physicians women are impartially pronounced successful.

In our High Schools, we have maidens just budding into womanhood, for whom the possibilities of life are grand and whose talents well enriched by liberal education will in the near future be felt and acknowledged.

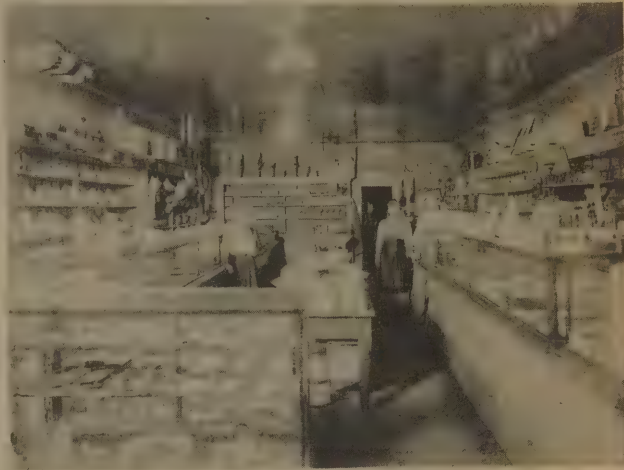
Thus far the women of this comparatively new county have struggled against the tide but with change of current a more suspicious destiny awaits the woman who bravely endeavors to dare and do her part, until the onward sweep of the river of time carries her whither she would.

The day for confining woman within the four walls of home will nill is past and gone.

Home, home, sweet home is just as sweet as ever but confine a man closely to his abode, and how soon the refrain would die from heart and lips.

We are not advocating "Woman's Rights" in the usual acceptance of the term, for the near future will decide that question, but we

do claim that every woman should be granted the freedom of choosing unbiased her own vocation. As every woman cannot be a wife, and the mistress of a happy home, she should endeavor to become self-supporting, independent and thus maintain true dignity, be her fate in life what it may.



An early variety store had everything from frying pans to fly swatters.

Always finely crafted furniture items in the same location



Since 1856

1856 - 1919 Owners at various times were a Mr. Saunders; Mr. Trillip; Mr. Pierce.
1920 - 1945 Owned & operated by Mr. A. L. Hallers until his death.
1945 - 1981 Owned & operated by Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Patterson.
In later years by Mrs. Patterson until her retirement.
1981 - Present Owned & operated by Ted & Peggie Strawser.

Ted & Peggie Strawser's

Patterson's Furniture
Downtown
Wolcottville, Indiana

'Rally round the Flag' was an order for Civil War fighters



EDITOR'S NOTE: In gathering research material for these historical editions, a sheaf of yellowed newsprint pages fell out of one of the LaGrange Publishing Company's very old reference books.

It was the text of a speech, written by Major John H. Rerick, MD., LaGrange physician, Civil War surgeon, and later publisher of *The Standard*. The occasion for the speech is not known. But it is repeated here in its entirety.

The flag, the emblem of sovereignty- of the will and power of the government, takes first rank in war. It waves from every fortress, from the masthead of every warship and in every battle line.

To sustain or advance its position is the ambition of every soldier and sailor. To lower it in the face of the enemy their greatest chagrin, and sometimes their greatest shame. There is no war while the flag remains unassailed. When a gun is fired at it, war begins.

There were three great flag events in the War of the Rebellion. The first was the firing on the American flag at Fort Sumter. The people had contended for years and might have continued their quarrel to this day, had that shot been withheld. The echo of that fire stirred the hearts of the people at the north as they had never been before. "The rebels have fired on the flag!" resounded from city to city from town to town, and from neighbor to neighbor.

"They have fired on the flag; they have fired on the flag", cried husband to wife father to son, son to father and mother. "The union is assailed. We must go to its defense." And they did go by the hundred thousand.

The next flag event that stirred the hearts of the people was at Alexandria Virginia. The brave and impulsive Ellsworth as he was marching through that city, saw a rebel flag floating from a hotel. He rushed in and up stairs to where it was, seized it and started down, when he was met by and shot down by the proprietor. But he, the next moment fell himself, shot by a Union soldier. The whole country, north and south, then began to realize what two flags in one country meant. The north was more firmly determined there should be but one flag, and that, the Union flag- and for the supremacy of that flag - war, the most terrible, raged for four long years.

Then came the third flag event, a great and joyous one, when the identical flag that Col. Anderson was compelled to haul down at Fort Sumter was rehoisted over that fortress and over a free people.

The flag was then vindicated. Hundreds of cannon pealed forth glad acclaim as it went

up, and the great orator-preacher, Henry Ward Beecher, proclaimed the good tidings it meant to the people, and the whole north rejoiced.

The position of the flag in war measures victories and reverses. Its place in the hearts of the people in time of peace measures the stability of the Union.

A regiment of soldiers consists of ten companies of 100 men each. Each regiment must carry the stars and stripes, the national flag, upon which the name and number of the regiment is inscribed on the center white stripe. The regimental banner, distinguishing the regiment from other regiments may also be carried, but "Old Glory" must not be omitted.

A soldier, called the color bearer, is detailed to carry the national flag and take care of it, with seven other soldiers at his side as guards. When the regiment is to be formed in line, the color bearer takes position and the several companies form in line on the colors, five to the right and five to the left, the flag always being in the center.

If a battle is pending, and the order is to advance, the whole line moves forward with the colors. The flag is always in the front line. If, in the shock of battle, the line is broken, the order comes. "Rally on the flag, men! Rally on the flag!", and the men reform their line on the flag.

The sight of the stars and stripes waving amidst the smoke and blaze of battle nerves and inspires the brave soldier. In it is embodied all he is fighting for, his own personal honor and the standing of his regiment and the glory of his state. When the color bearer falls, as often they must, the nearest comrade grasps the flag and holds it aloft again; if he also falls, then another seizes it. It must float. The brave men, as they see it restored to position, or advanced toward the enemy, cheer with all their might and increase the rapidity of their fire. The wounded unto death turn their eyes to its tattered folds and faintly shout with the last gasp of their swiftly ebbing life.

Ah, you who in peace sing "Rally round the flag, boys" little appreciate what it is to rally around it in the din of a great battle with shot and shell filling the air all about.

This is no fancy picture from the imagination of what might be. This community has furnished soldiers whose service directly connected with the flag exceeds any coloring I can give. Every soldier who fights in line of battle helps sustain the flag in that battle, but the position of some gives them opportunity for more especial service than others. An official report of the battle of Fort Donelson shows that at one time in front of the regiment with which I had the honor to serve as medical officer, the firing had ceased and, there being doubts as to the position of the enemy, the late Major Bingham, then a captain, took the colors and advanced ten or twelve paces to the front and waved them in the air. The daring act had the effect intended, of developing the line of the

enemy, and the battle was renewed with increased energy.

The Colonel commanding the same regiment at the battle of Shiloh, in his official report describing the conflict at the hottest place in that bloody struggle, known as the "hornet's nest" says:

"Our color bearer and guard were either killed or wounded at the same moment, and two brave men in succession being shot down, and our flag riddled with balls, Lieutenant Jacob Newman, in command of Company H, bore it aloft, but soon fell, mortally wounded."

A few moments later, when he was brought to the rear, I assisted in removing the ball that had passed through his body, sent him to a boat in the river, never expecting to see him again, and reported the wound a mortal one to the authorities. But surgeons then could not tell what would kill really brave men. (exhibit piece of flag.)

No doubt soldiers of other regiments represented here could tell of as brave service in behalf of the flags of their regiments. But there are times in battles when the sight of the flag awakens the emotions of great enthusiasm, rather than summoning all the courage and determination of the souls of men.

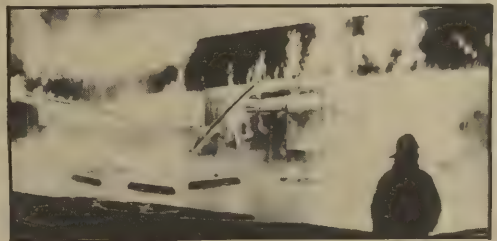
It is glorious to see it moving steadily on in conflict or floating victoriously over a captured stronghold. It was my privilege to be a looker-on at the battle of Chattanooga, and in Fort Wood where General Grant was directing the movement, witness the battle on Lookout Mountain. There was an open field of some ten acres on the side of the mountain facing the city. I saw the Confederate line with its flag retreat across the field, followed clearly by the Union line with "Old Glory" waving triumphantly. There were fleecy clouds floating on the mountainside and sometimes below the line.

Thousands of eyes were fixed upon the mountain and thousands held their breath, and the vast army in the valley watching seemed touched with sudden death. High o'er us soared great Lookout, robed in purple, a glory on his face, a human meaning in his hand, calm features beneath the heavenly grandeur.

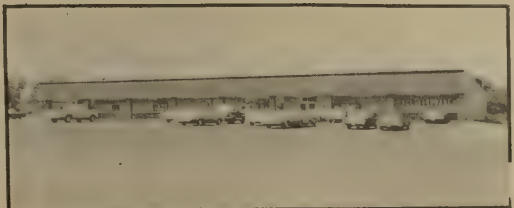
The next day I saw the great charge up Missionary Ridge and saw the colors planted on its crest. These were the glad sights of a lifetime. I could not probably see the like again should I live a thousand years.

And I can devoutly wish no war may come within that time, making it necessary to carry the American Flag in battle line and plant it on the stronghold of any enemy.

1939 - Store started by Charles Skinner



June 1978 - The Challenge



Today - The Triumph



IGA
Econo-Mart
IGA GROCERY • PRO & ACE HARDWARE
Wolcottville, Ind.

Early settler recalls burning of LaGrange

EDITOR'S NOTE: C. B. Holmes, one of the first settlers in LaGrange, wrote of those early years in *The Standard* in 1876.

The First Settlement of the Town of LaGrange from Personal Recollection
By C. B. Holmes

The court-house was built in the years 1842 and 1843. The first two log houses were built by Isaac P. Grannis and Thomas Clark, the first was used as a sort of hotel or boarding house for the accommodation of Mr. Grannis and family, while building the court-house, he being the contractor. The Clark family that built the second house was a migratory pack, only fit for hunting, fishing and loafing around the country. They could not endure civilization, and after a few years, moved off West, where game was more plenty.

The first frame building put up in town was a store house erected by Wm. Wigton on the site now occupied by Lockard, as a saloon, the former being destroyed a few years ago by fire. This building was headquarters for nearly two years. A store was kept in it consisting of dry goods, groceries, hardware and all other such goods as were usually kept in a country store at that day. The post-office was also kept here.

The writer first got it established and was appointed postmaster, and he well recollects his first quarterly report to the Post-office Department, was just one dollar and eighty cents. On or about the same time of his appointment as postmaster, he was also elected Justice of the Peace. So that crude law was dealt out with other goods and calamities, all at this great corner store. You may readily believe the writer felt himself a man of some importance and not feeling himself able to withstand all these glories and elevations along, in the year following, 1844, he took to himself a wife and has since continued to reside at LaGrange. The two first frame residences built in town were by Peter H. Fox and George Hopkins; the first still remains and stands just east across the street from Everhart's wagon shop, and owned at present by T.A. Sefton; the other was part of the residence of M. L. Punches, lately destroyed by fire. The first house mentioned, built by Fox was occupied by Alex Holmes and family, who moved from Lima to this place and in company with George Holmes built and operated an ashery.

The old site is plainly visible yet at the corner of A. S. Case's property, Wm. Hopkins, who built the second frame residence, was a carpenter and joiner and came from Medina, Ohio. He occupied his house for some two years, and sold to Sol Shattuck, our first permanent blacksmith.

This same year, 1843, came also Robert McClaskey and family from Ohio. He was our first boot and shoemaker, built the third log house in town, on the site now occupied by the late residence of widow Belding. A few other small buildings may have been built in this year. But in 1844, the county offices having all been removed from Lima to LaGrange, and the courts being held here, our town made a rapid advance.

S. M. Cutler, then county Auditor, built the present residence of John Samuel A. Bartlett the residence now owned and occupied by Esq. Ferrall, J. Kromer built his well known residence on the west of the square, C.B. Holmes built a residence on the site now occupied as a shoe store by Wm. A. Cornell afterwards moved to the first lot west of the Episcopal church.

Peter L. Mason built a double log house on the lot now occupied by the Presbyterian church. This same year was also built the south part of the old American house, or Vaughn's hotel in LaGrange. Wm. S. Boyd built the famous Boyd house and opened a hotel and store in the same, besides various shops. During this and the following year, very many tradesmen came and established in our town, to wit: John and Wm. Garmire, manufacturers of furniture; A. Eminger, chair maker; Sol Shattuck, blacksmith;

Samuel and Wm. Boyd, Farmers; John K. Swartz, tailor; Robert McClaskey, shoemaker; John A. Butler, Physician; H. B. McCoy, Harness maker, and other tradesmen, that I can't now recollect. This saved us much from being tributary to Lima, to which place we had to send for all we needed for at least two years. In order to live and support our families directly interested each one of us. There were one or two articles that commanded cash to wit; Furs, Peltries and wheat.

All else was a source of dicker, such as lumber, corn, oats, potatoes, beef, pork, butter, home made sugar, etc. In order to turn these dicker articles into cash demanded a shrewd man indeed. Still it was done and most of our merchants at LaGrange overcame all these difficulties and lived. But to go back to 1843, and take a view of the disadvantages then to overcome, to make a county town the Seat of Justice, of a rich and growing county, of which each resident owner felt a just pride. Our town plat, was covered with the heaviest forest timber, and also a thick undergrowth of prickly ash and briars.

The first season we burned the ground all over; this killed most of the briars and small shrubbery. Next came the larger timber, which we cut down at odd spells in the way of a "spree" all turning out of an evening, some chopping down, and others cutting and piling brush and burning up, all that would burn. Often-times we would work till midnight. Old and young, would all engage in this labor, sometimes in one part, and then in another of the town. The principal operators in these labors were Robert McClaskey, Jesse Wells, the Clark boys, Ryan boys, Shadrack Carney, Isaac P. Grannis, Wm. S. Boyd, the writer, and especially, let me mention the name. Of our old veteran friend, James Packer, a man that has done more honest days labor in the county than any other man.

The Afflictions
Our greatest afflictions in those days were fever and ague, also the itch. The former we could break with quinine, when we were able to buy it, if not, we had to shake until we wore it out. But that other fellow, brim-stone failed to cure. It was of the real genuine old seven-year kind, imported from Michigan. When it fastened on you, you was gone up for seven years, sure, and it was said one family in our town got a second lease. Those living here at that time will recollect who I mean. As a community we were not very lousy. That pest never seemed to prosper here to any alarming extent.

The Preachers
"To comfort us in these trying scenes and to keep us from running into heathenism, each Sunday we had the Gospel preached to us, by Father Hayes, Elder Gould, Abram Rowe, and that very best of men, Elder Thomas B. Conley. Of this man it is due to his memory to say that he went more to visit the sick, and preached more funerals than all other ministers in the county, during his sojourn on earth. I am only sorry to say that I am not able to do his memory more justice. Suffice to say, he was the embodiment of goodness. Several of his children are living in our midst, who should justly feel proud of his name.

Why We Stuck

I presume many timid hearted people would say after reading this. What could induce any man to go to such a place, and undertake to build up a town, with all these disadvantages and hardships. The old adage says, "it takes a great many people to fill the world," and there were some of the number, willing to cast their lot here, all of course with some interest directly or indirectly at stake.

The writer had lands near town to enhance in value. This was his interest. All knew it was to be the permanent Seat of Justice, of a rich and growing county, and must ere long make a town of some note, and lots and lumber being cheap, it was an inducement to build and get the certain advance on their property. Others came expecting to fill the county offices, and as soon as one cast his lot here, he influenced his friends to come also. With all these influences and many others we soon got our village started, and many hands made light work.

In a few years the timber gave way and the stumps rotted out, and step by step, year by year, we advanced in numbers and strength, and with all the trials and disadvantages incident to commencing in the woods, there are many things that are pleasant to recall.

The clearing of every equare rod was looked on with pleasure and the man was stimulated to clear another. Just so in clearing for a farm. Then the sociability between men, all laboring in the same cause makes it a work of pleasure. Each new comer was greeted as a brother, for we needed help. Money was not altogether the test of the worth of the man as now, it was rather his real worth as a citizen. For the first five years of the early settlement of our village, we had but a very little bickering or lawing and I often heard it said, and had good reason to know that there was not one fisticuff in town.

It is true we did not live as high or wear as fine clothes as we do now, yet we enjoyed what we did have.

While writing up these random notes, I conversed with Wm. S. Boyd, Samuel H. Boyd, John Ryason, James Packer, J. H. Hoagland and many others of the early pioneers of the village and vicinity and all admitted that at no point of their lives did they enjoy themselves as well as when first settling up the county.

Many that commenced with us have been called to their long home, ere they saw our little city a railroad town, with a good home market. No more hauling wheat to Fort Wayne and Hillsdale and getting fifty cents per bushel for it and being absent from home three or four days, sleeping in barns or on bar-room floors, and helping each other up hills or out of the mire. These times have passed, but they are fresh in the memory of three-fourths of the farmers of LaGrange county. In conclusion, let me say, let us all try and shape our affairs to attend the great Centennial Exhibition the coming summer.

What are we living and laboring for, all our lives, unless we see and learn something? This is no grand humbug but the grandest opportunity to see about all that is worth seeing, both in the New and Old World, and also a visit to the great city of Philadelphia and also Washington. Let us commence to talk the matter up, at least. If alive and well, count me in for one.

RECORDER
OF
LAGRANGE COUNTY,
LAGRANGE, IND.



An early view of the LaGrange County Courthouse with new stand of trees.

County seat moved to briar patch

9-8-82-LaGrange, Ind.-Sesquicentennial-13

The Town of LaGrange came into being largely because it was picked as the seat of county government in 1842.

Lima, site of the first county seat, and Ontario competed bitterly for the honor, and it is believed that the county commissioners chose LaGrange, in the geographic center of the county, as a compromise site.

It was an unlikely place for a town. The area was covered with prickly ash and berry bushes, over which towered virgin oak trees. Fly Creek, which ran through the site overflowed with regularity each spring and marsh land from the creek extended up to the square where the courthouse now stands.

The first log homes to be erected housed the builders of the first courthouse, a two-story frame affair. The courthouse was completed in December, 1843 and in June the following year, the commissioners met for the first time in the new building.

With the courthouse came the first frame buildings to house the circuit-riding lawyers and citizens coming to town to pay taxes, register deeds, etc.

Platted in 1836

The town was platted in 1836 into lots 66 by 132 feet with a public square measuring 132 feet by 280 feet. Streets, 66 feet in width were laid out in a crosswork pattern around the public square. North-south streets were named Mountain, High, Detroit, Poplar, Walnut, Sycamore and Canal. East-west streets were named Lake, Steuben, Factory, Michigan, Spring, LaFayette and Wayne.

The town was still little more than a clearing carved out of a sea of virgin timber in the 1840s. Residents had to go little further than their back yards to kill a deer from the herds which roamed the area.

The LaGrange Post Office was established in 1844 and its first quarter receipts totalled \$1.08.

In 1850, the town's population still did not exceed 330 residents, but the following couple of years, the town began to boom. Merchants, tradesmen and professional people moved in to accommodate the residents coming to the courthouse. Trips to LaGrange were usually all-day affairs and visitors combined shopping with their business at the courthouse.

In 1855 the town was incorporated, ground was broken for the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad (a project that would be delayed for several years), and new businesses were springing up.

Businesses

In the late 1800's the town's population had grown to 1,400. The following businesses were listed in LaGrange:

Seven dry goods stores, four millineries, two tailor shops, five grocery stores, four boot and shoe shops, six drug stores, three hardware stores, three butcher shops, three saddle and harness shops, two banks, 12

lawyers, 13 physicians, three newspaper and printing shops, two jewelers, two dental offices, two photographers, a piano and organ store, three sewing machine shops, three barbershops, four restaurants, three flour and feed stores, three hotels, three saloons, two farm implement stores, five blacksmith shops, three wagon shops, one carriage factory and a cheese factory, the first of its kind in the county.

The first rustic schools in the community evolved first into a two-story frame structure in 1866 in which high school courses also were taught. In 1874, however, it was evident that the school was too small and a three story brick structure was begun—to cost \$30,000, including furniture. That building, on West Central, served the needs of LaGrange students until the school consolidations in the 1960s.

In 1872, what was described as a "superb brick building"—the new county jail was finished at a cost of \$28,000.

It was apparent, too, that the frame courthouse was too small to handle the county offices and the commissioners authorized the construction of a new facility in 1877 at a cost of some \$47,000. After a change of architects and several construction delays, the building was finished in November, 1879 at a cost of \$71,675.32, some \$25,000 more than the original contract price.

Still an attraction

It was a stunning building for its day and continues to be an attraction for tourists and a source of pride for county residents.

The corner stone for the structure was laid in August, 1878, and a copper box within the stone contains the following items:

Copy of the acts of 1832, the year when the county was organized.

The bar docket of the circuit court for April, 1878.

Copy of the LaGrange County Directory.

Copy of the Daily Service, a camp-meeting paper.

Copy of The LaGrange Standard, Centennial Issue.

Copy of The LaGrange Register, August 15, 1878.

Copy of The Wolcottville Gazette, August 9, 1878.

Copy of an application for Farmer's Rescue Insurance.

Piece of three-cent script, also 10, 25 and five-cent script.

Two pieces of private-issue script.

Six Confederate postage stamps, found in a Confederate camp in Virginia.

Coin dated 1771; another, a silver coin, dated 1774; a 25-cent silver U.S. coin, and a 40-cent U.S. silver coin.

Premium list of the LaGrange County Agricultural Society.

A Swiss medal.

Photograph of the New England Chronicle and Gazette, dated 1775.

Copy of the school law and acts of 1877.



Rurick Hotel, on East Spring, was popular hostelry.



LaGrange School as it looked shortly after opening.



The LaGrange County jail was an imposing structure.



White pants were part of LaGrange band's uniforms.



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Woodruff's "main street" as it appeared in the early 1900s.



A later-day scene of downtown LaGrange showing a variety of early vintage autos.

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Civil War vets march in Memorial Day parade in LaGrange in 1886.

1846 LaGrange

Directory is impressive

The following article appeared in the September 8, 1949, edition of The Standard:

W. W. Wenger of Camden, Mich., has taken the following business directory from the LaGrange County map of 1864. It will be of interest to many to note the innumerable changes which the years have brought.

Attorneys at law, claim and pension agents were Andrew Ellison, J. W. Cummings, A. B. Kennedy and J. B. Wade.

Physicians and surgeons were Francis P. Griffith; M.D., James Miller, M.D. and G. Sites, surgeon dentist.

Druggists at that time were H. M. Betts and Holmes and Cutting.

Merchants were William Cummings, dry goods; Will and Clugston, dry goods; D. S. and E. Welch, dry goods; S. Rose, dry goods; D. W. Bradley, books and stationery; Rice and Son, hardware; Rheubottom and Co., groceries; J. R. Welch Groceries; Ed Tucker, groceries.

Hotel keepers were S. H. Boyd House; Thomas Smurr, proprietor of Smurr House;

John Cromer, proprietor of Kromer House. William A. Cornell, J. M. Hall and Richard Favorite were boot and shoe makers.

Blacksmiths were Jacob Trexler, W. W. Modie, James Devlin and J. H. Caton.

J. S. Taylor was editor of the LaGrange Standard at that time.

Jacob Newman was department provost marshal

Carpenters and joiners were S. W. Pike and Thomas Askey

William A. Cornell was Justice of the Peace and B. W. Vesey was Justice and farmer.

Welch, Hudson and Welch were proprietors of the saw and planing mill. O. Miller was proprietor of the steam and saw mill.

The postmaster was William Rheubottom. Everhart and Moon had a carriage and Wagon Shop and did painting and blacksmithing.

C. R. Moon was a music teacher and dealer in melodeons.

George Hoff and N. W. Smurr were saddle and harness makers.

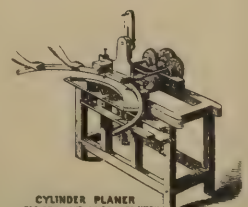
P. Wertsbaugher was a tanner. Farmers included E. W. Weir, W. B. Bingham and Robert McClaskey.

John Garmire was a cabinet maker and William S. Boyd was proprietor of the grist and saw mill.

The county officers in 1864 were as follows: P. N. Wilcox, auditor; A. S. Case, clerk; J. W. Welch, treasurer; Henry Nicholls, recorder; William Selby sheriff; R. S. Hubbard, Coroner; B. Farrand Surveyor; James Smith, Williams Seaburn and A. J. Atwood, commissioners; Jared Ford, president agricultural society; Thomas Vankirk, Secretary.

Statistics of LaGrange County are listed for each township as follows: Eden 125 voters, population 672, value of real estate \$2,339.02. Newbury voters 183; population 742 real estate \$2,296.00; Van Buren - voters, 324, population 1,606 real estate \$194,489. Clearspring - voters 224, population 1,209 real estate \$24,306. Clay - voters 169, population 912 real estate \$198,475, Lima

voters, 306, population 1,355, real estate \$317,729. Johnson voters 230, population 1,068. \$271,335. Bloomfield - voters 379, population 1,572 real estate \$309,042. Greenfield voters 177 population 952, real estate \$350,666 Milford - voters 335, population 1,039 real estate \$233,561. Springfield voters 198, population 800, real estate \$ 250,275.

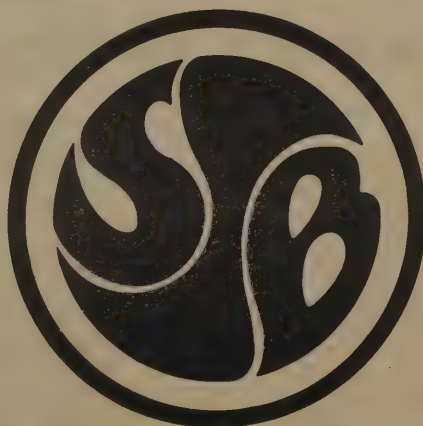




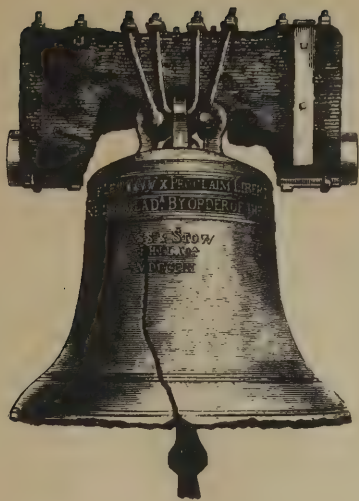
For many years, Shipsewana State Bank has been serving this area by providing professional financial counseling and account management to you, our customers.

Our philosophy of banking, summed up in the words "we listen," has served us well and has contributed not only to our growth but to the growth of the community and its people.

We invite you to come into the bank at any time to discuss your financial needs with one of our officers. As always, their insight, experience, and expertise will provide you with the most professional, personal banking service available. And, as always, "we listen."



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MEMBER F.D.I.C.



County native recalls 1876 visit to Philadelphia to view the wonders of Nation's Centennial

EDITOR'S NOTE: Frank Spaulding, County Native who was educated at the LaGrange Collegiate Institute, came to be known as the Sage of South Milford in his later years. He kept a series of journals throughout his life outlining day-to-day experiences in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

One of the first entries in his series of journals was the following account of his visit to Philadelphia for the celebration of the Nation's centennial in 1876.

Among the experiences he writes about is seeing Francis Scott Key, the author of our National Anthem, sing his tribute to America.

July 19 - In company with my father and mother, leave LaGrange, LaGrange County at 11:46 a.m. Arrive at Fort Wayne, 2 p.m., arrive at Mansfield, Ohio at 7 p.m., arrive at Bellville, Ohio at 8 p.m.

June 20 - At Bellville.

June 21 - After visiting the stone quarry, went to Lexington, took tea with grandpa. Stayed all night with Aunt Julia. Took dinner this June 22 with grandpa, after which visited the cemetery. Mother remained at Bellville while Pa and I went to the Centennial. Leave Mansfield at 7:30 p.m.; arrive at Pittsburgh at 2:15 a.m. of the 23rd. Riding through the Allegheny mountains and, arrived at Harrisburg, after which, crossed the Susquehanna River. Arrived at Philadelphia at 2:30 p.m., where we found in waiting, Mr. Ralph Ashley. In company with him, went to our rooms at No. 411 Arch St.

Our first visit was to old Independence Hall. Saw the original tables, chairs, and furniture used by the signers of the Declaration of Independence as well as the pictures of the signers, and the Liberty Bell. From there we went to the old Custom House, thence to the Delaware River, where I saw ships from all parts of the globe. Saw the stationary ship where men were prepared for the ocean business.

June 24 - On our way to the Centennial, saw the grave of Benjamin Franklin. After getting to the Centennial, our first visit was to the Old Log Cabin, where I saw a side saddle 170 years old, a clock 400 years old, a John Hancock chair, 80 years in one family, buttons of 1776 original, a chair which was brought from England by Barney Thompson in the second ship which came over, a desk and looking glass 145 years old, a churn 200 years old, and a pillow used in 1720 (looked as though it hadn't been washed since.)

Horticulture Hall

Fern trees of Austria; 1776 Cypress tree; bearing orange and lemon trees. Century plant, none in bloom. Eli Whitney's cotton gin.

Main Buildings

Original Indian canoe made of birch bark, longest steel rail in the world, 120 feet, 62 lb. per yard, first steel rail made in United States, 98 feet, weight 1995 lb. The Centennial chair made by J. K. Kautayhizer of Goshen, Elkhart County. Said chair composed of 100 different kinds of wood, no

two pieces the same and one piece connected with 27 other pieces.

June 25 - Saw Don Pedro, Emperor of Brazil and wife. Saw Piece of copper, largest in the world. Weight, 5720 lb. Went to theater this evening.

June 26 - This day we took the steamer Ariel, went down the river to the bay, a distance of 63 miles. 75 cents round trip, including dinner. Left at 7 a.m.; arrived at 7 p.m. Saw the U.S. Navy yard, the place where General Green fought his battle in the Revolutionary War. Saw the city of Camden, saw boats and ocean vessels, saw the ocean for the first time.

General Scenes

A 20 inch Rodman gun weight, 115, 100 lb., shot, 1080 lb., powder, 200 lb.; 18 - inch rifle shell, 200 lb., fired 720 powder 35 lb., shot 180 lb.

Part of a gun taken from the Delaware River. A 12 - inch Thompson Rifle weight 8,920, shot 600 lb., powder 120 lb.

Cypress stump removed from the mouth of Cape Fear River in 1875; The Daniel Webster plow, made by him in 1837. Length, 13 feet; Piece of a tree which was 130 feet high; Pistol taken from a Revolutionary officer; A chain made in 1635, Original copy of The Star Spangled Banner by Francis S. Key.

Also, John Adams' desk, brought over in the Mayflower in 1620. One of the first foot stools made; it was a dandy; Pistol taken from a British officer at Crown Point; Old Abe, the eagle which was carried all through the late war.

June 28 - At Art gallery, : Bus Weight 900 lbs, price \$1,450; Carriage, weight 200 lb., price \$2,100; One of the three boats in which Captain Kane in 1856 pushed over the ice, within 80 miles of the open sea. Inlaid table containing 100,000 different kinds of wood; Saw Don Pedro again today.

June 29 - Piano, 26 years old, equal to those of the present; Italy statue, price \$5,000; Chair made from the wood of the Washington Elm, under which tree Washington took command of the American Army July 3, 1775.

June 30 - Saw a 72 - inch cast iron gas pipe. Portion of a 9 - inch armor plate fired at the Dock Yard, Portsmouth by the English admiral gun; a 7 - inch muzzle-loading rifle. This rifle shot pointed chilled powder; 14 lb. distance of gun from plate, 30 feet, number of shots, 4 size of plate 38 by 2 feet, 9 inches thick; Another plate 7 ft., 6 in., x 6 ft., 8 in. thick. Gun an 8 inch smooth bore, powder 13 lb., 68 lb. cast iron shot; Gun made in Sheffield, England, Another 6 ft. by 3 ft. 6 in. wide, 11 inches thick, weight 9002 lb.

Also, another 11 inches thick, shot at by a 7 inch muzzle rifle, 18½ lb. powder, distance 30 ft., shot only lacked an inch of going through plate; An armor plate weighing 4,592 lb., another weighing 20 tons; Gun, 18 inch bore, powder used, 330 lb.; Armor plate, weight 13,867 lb.; A plank cut from a tree which was 288 ft. high in diameter at the bottom.

Also, a wagon built at Philadelphia in 1861, used in the Army of the Potomac until 1865, when it was taken to Nashville, Tenn. Weight of the wagon, 1,850 lb., first cost \$150. Total cost of repairs during this time \$7. Wagon in good running order; Small Spanish gun cast about 1480, used by Cortez in the conquest of Mexico.

Also Norway cart, price \$80; black bear

carpet; polar bear carpet; wool carpet; red fox carpet; badger skin carpet; all kinds of fur too numerous to mention; Japan bedstead, price \$1,000; very small quilt, price, \$1.70.

July 1 - In the city at the wharf, saw: 27 ft. sturgeon valued at \$8 a piece.

At the zoo we saw what one generally sees at the Gardens, saw a snake 40 ft. long. Gold from British Columbia, price, \$8,116,970.

July 2 - Delaware statehouse bell, cast 1763. Looking at everything in general, and not taking notes, except from the Daniel Webster plow, spoken of before. Its name, Constitutional Soil Expander; owned by the College of Agriculture.

This is what Dan said with regard to his plow:

"When I have hold of the handles of my big plow, with four yoke of oxen to pull it through, and hear the roots crack and see the stumps go under out of sight and observe the smooth mellow surface of the plowed field, I feel more enthusiasm than comes from my encounters in public life in Washington." - Daniel Webster.

July 3 - At the Centennial in the daytime; in the evening over on Chestnut Street

watching the Grand Parade, which lasted nearly all night. At 12 o'clock the bells began to ring and the guns to fire.

July 4 - The Big day of the Centennial. Guns firing and bells ringing all day.

In the p.m. went to Independence square. Saw Don Pedro again. Saw Samuel J. Tilden, Vice-president, Terry of Michigan, George Hays and other big guns. Saw Francis S. Key; heard him sing "The Star Spangled Banner"

In the evening, went to Fairmount Park to witness the fireworks. It rained so that they had to give it up.

July 5 - Started for home "via" of Washington. Visited the Capitol; was in the House of Representatives; saw O. P. Morton. This evening went to Pittsburgh.

July 6 - Leave Pittsburgh for Mansfield, Ohio, and Bellville. Arrived at Bellville, 9 p.m. We stayed a few days then returned to our home.

This ended my trip to the Centennial. I look upon it as one of the grandest trips of my life or ever will take. I not only got to see the Eastern country, but people from all parts of the world.

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Military unit, probably from the 1890's, marches in an event thought to be at Rome City. Marks through the picture are from a cracked glass negative.



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Standard

LaGrange NEWS

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Winter-time traveling was no problem as this Brighton scene suggests.

Was county site of an 'Indian War?'

Was there a skirmish between the whites and Indians early in the county's development?

Early accounts of the county's history don't mention any, but an article in the November 24, 1949 issue of *The Standard* says a pitched battle must have been fought between the Indians and settlers south of LaGrange.

A bloody battle was fought in a field about one mile south of LaGrange with the number of killed and wounded in doubt at this writing.

A group of ruffians, causing disturbances and threatening to steal cattle of farmers in that locality, were met by a band of local farmers heavily armed with guns. The ruffians made a vicious attack, swinging axes and clubs but were stopped cold by the farmers who fired on their attackers and laid a number of them low. However the ruffians managed to reach some of the farmers and strike them down.

The fight took place somewhere between 1492 when Columbus discovered America, and 1837 when the last Indians of this locality under Chief Shipshewana were escorted to a reservation in the West. The reporter of the *Standard* and *News* did not happen to be around to get a blow by blow account of the fight and the story has to be put together with evidence at hand.

In a hollow west of the Bert Wear home, where the Hawpatch road branches off from the Town Line road, the evidences of the ancient bloody battle between early settlers and Indians were found. As he plowed the area some years ago, Mr. Wear found not far apart in the low place a large enough number of weapons to give good credence to the battle story. Among them was one or more long barrel early rifles, a sword, one or more old rusted early type pistols and a number of iron Indian tomahawk or battle axe heads. The fact that the two types of weapons were left about the hollow gives evidence that there were settlers with their old pistols and muskets and Indians with their tomahawks in the fierce fight. It can be deducted that if there were that many weapons left behind there were bodies of Indians and white men on the ground when the battle ended.

One of the old pistols, now mostly a mass of rust, a relic of the Battle of the Hawpatch, is in the rare and large collection of old guns in the possession of Dr. Frank C. Cummings at his most interesting gun room and office at the rear of his residence.

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Steam threshing rig and crew pose at a county farm before going to work.

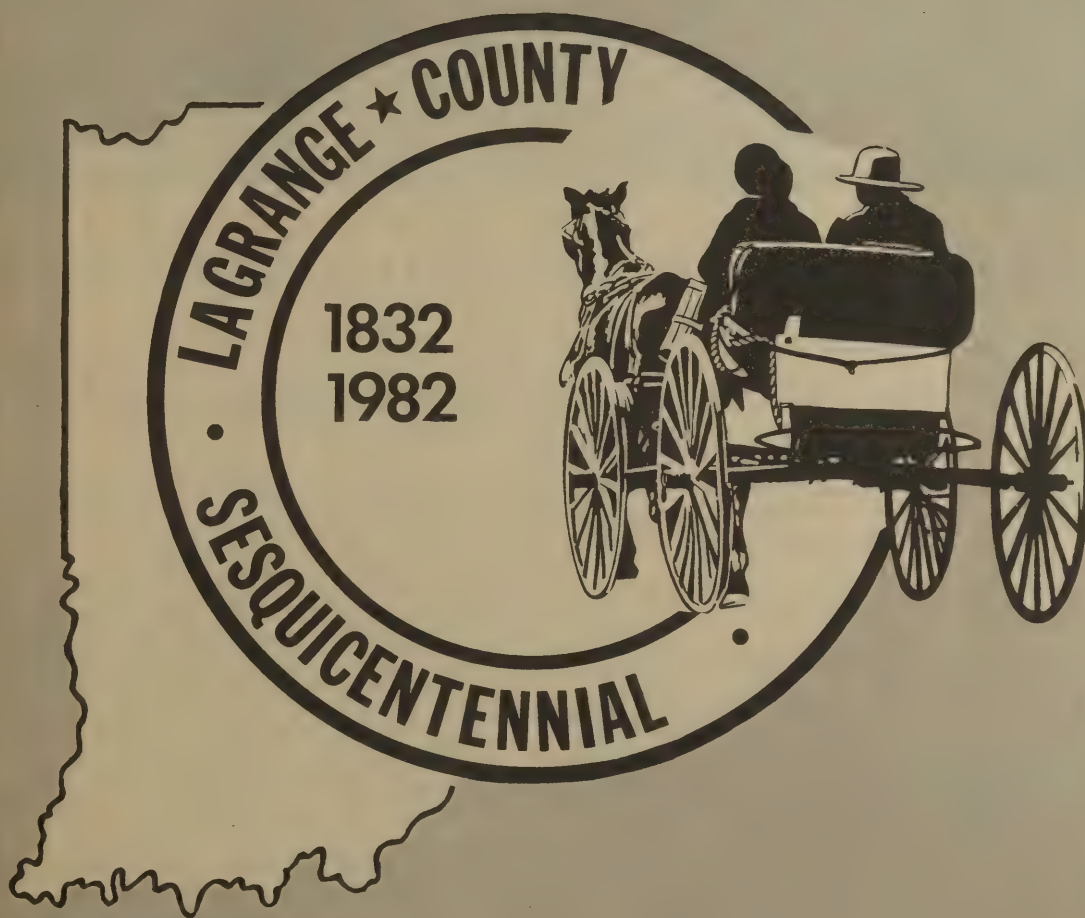


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The 20th century begins

Fall-1982

Compiled by
LaGrange Publishing Co., Inc.
LaGrange Standard-LaGrange News
The Countian



1900s bring major changes

The 20th century came at LaGrange County with a rush.

By the early 1900s four railroads criss-crossed the county, offering both passenger and freight service.

The old Indian trails and plank roads had given way to graveled avenues of commerce.

The first automobiles began to appear, sputtering and popping up and down our roads, stampeding teams and throwing up choking clouds of dust.

And, wonder of wonders, county residents read newspaper accounts of a couple of former Indiana residents, the Wright brothers, who had flown in the air in an aeroplane.

We began to build more dams on our rivers—not grist or lumber—but for turbines to produce electricity.

Telephone lines began to stretch out over the countryside. A new device called a radiophone was introduced and owners said they were picking up news from all over the county.

Tractors, heavy cumbersome things, were being put to use on some farms. Farm machinery was getting more sophisticated and farmers were expanding their land holdings.

It began to look as if the only thing we couldn't control was the weather, which hit with a ferocity in the winter and plagued us with rain—or the lack of it—during the growing months.

We were barely past the first decade of the 1900s when we learned there was another aspect of our lives we couldn't control—events in Europe which were leading to war. The United States declared its neutrality, and for a while it looked as if we weren't going to become embroiled in the conflict.

But the sinking of the British Ship, The Lusitania, by a German submarine began to change all that. Americans, 128 of them, perished in the attack. Then the Germans announced unrestricted submarine warfare in the Atlantic, including the sinking of American ships, and we were at war.

By 1918, a million American troops were in Europe. LaGrange County records show that 320 men were called from LaGrange County. The number is undoubtedly higher because of the enlistment of many county men at centers outside the county.

County records show that nine county men died in World War I.

But the county also contributed some \$2,220,000 in war stamps and bonds during the nearly two years in which the Americans were involved in the fighting.

Meanwhile, other historic events were beginning to touch county residents.

In 1917, women were given the right to vote. Some hard-headed, status quo residents of the county predicted that elections would now be a farce. What did women know about politics?

And we got nationwide prohibition. The temperance crowd rejoiced...and so did the still operators and bootleggers.

With the merciful ending of World War I in late 1918, the county went back to business as usual. Oh, there was some nagging inflation, but farm prices remained adequate and wages sufficient to support a man and his family.

But the inflation wouldn't go away. Production began a gradual slide and in 1929 the stock market caved in. It was the beginning of what was to be known as the Great Depression.

The banks, which had over-extended themselves in the post-war years, began to fold. What savings had been accumulated over those years vanished in declarations of bankruptcy.

Families who thought they could ride out the hard times with modest withdrawals from their savings accounts were now destitute.

Farmers who could meet most of their needs from produce and livestock were well-off by most standards. But wage earners, now without jobs, had few, if any, means of keeping home and family together.

As the depression deepened, the old practice of neighbor helping neighbor, instilled in our pioneer days, grew. Local relief groups were formed to provide food and clothing for the destitute.

One LaGrange resident, Alton Merriman, became known as the area's good Samaritan, feeding 2,471 individuals — mostly men on the road looking for work — in 1931. He was helped in his effort by donations from farm families in the area.

The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932 brought some changes. After his inauguration in 1933, he pushed through Congress his "New Deal," the establishment of government-sponsored public works programs which provided some work, at least, for the impoverished.

Roosevelt also reorganized the banking system, setting up among other changes, a program of insurance for depositors in case of future bank failures.

And, in the 1930s a new, dreaded word came into our vocabularies—polio, a crippling and sometimes fatal disease which struck mostly at young people.

Most prevalent during the summer months, the disease struck many young people of the county. Eventually, summer events such as swimming, picnicking, concerts and such were curtailed to prevent the spread of the disease.

Those of us from that era remember the relief we felt when, years later, Jonas Salk announced his vaccine to prevent polio.

Once again, in the late 1930s, the ominous sounds of an impending war were being heard in Europe, most of them centering on the German dictator, Adolph Hitler, who came to power out of the chaos of World War I.

But the United States declared its neutrality in the matter. Perhaps it would work itself out. Perhaps we wouldn't be caught up in this one. Perhaps...



Looking Back Through The Years

1903

The St. Joseph Valley Traction Company is organized to build an electric line from LaGrange to South Bend. Newbury, Clay and Bloomfield Townships all vote to help fund the venture.

The Ellison banks at LaGrange and Topeka close their doors as they announce their liabilities exceed their assets by \$150,000. They are later succeeded by the LaGrange State Bank, Dr. William H. Short, president, and the Topeka State Bank, J.N. Babcock, president.

It is the year that the United States signs a treaty to build the Panama Canal... the first automobile trip across the country is completed, from San Francisco to New York - May 23 to August 1.

From the East comes word that two former Hoosiers, Wilbur and Orville Wright, have flown an airplane.

1904

Sunthimer Block at Shipshewana is destroyed by fire at a loss of \$30,000.

Grading for the Valley Line begins at LaGrange and Shipshewana.

Teddy Roosevelt carries the county in the fall election.

1905

Passenger service begins on the Valley Line between LaGrange and Shipshewana. A decision is made to extend the line east through Ontario and Mongo, and west to Middlebury.

Springfield and Milford Townships file remonstrances with the county commissioners banning saloon licenses, thus making complete the prohibition of saloons in the county for a period of two years.

Capt. Harley Crocker, a Union officer in the Civil War and a grandson of a Revolutionary War captain, dies. Sycamore Hall is dedicated at Topeka. Cost is \$12,000 of which \$4,000 was contributed by Andrew Carnegie and \$4,000 by Jacob Strauss, Ligonier.

The first Rotary Club is founded in Chicago.

An estimated 2,000 hogs perished in this county from cholera. Some 35,000 bushels of corn shipped out of the county—no hogs to eat it.

1906

Miss Katherine R. Williams is elected president of the National Bank of LaGrange.

County council appropriates \$900 for the removal of the iron fence around the courthouse square and for improving the grounds.

The first Corn School is held, featuring exhibits of corn, a parade of county school children, and an address by Indiana's Governor Hanly.

The Valley Line track is completed to Mongo.

It is the year of the great San Francisco earthquake and fire which left 452 dead and caused some \$350 million in damage.

1907

The LaGrange Town Board orders the paving of Detroit Street, making it the first street paved in the city.

LaGrange-Topeka-Ligonier electric line company is organized.

Valley Line begins purchase of right-of-way from Middlebury to Elkhart.

A national depression and financial panic hits.

1908

The courthouse square is paved. Roller

skaters and bicycle riders ordered off the courthouse walks.

Flu grips the county.

A February snow stops traffic with fence-top depths.

Hen lays St. Valentine's Day egg measuring 7½ by 6¼ inches.

Valley Line Depot finished in LaGrange. Ephraim Harper, 82, is honored as a still-active mail carrier in the county.

1909

Lima is renamed Howe.

Wheat prices soar to \$1.18 a bushel.

Observers count 112 buggies tied to the courthouse hitching rail... on a February day.

LaGrange County voters asked to vote on the question, "Shall the sale of intoxicating beverage be prohibited in this county?" The answer was "yes."

It is called the "year of the dandelion" in the county. Old timers say they have never seen such an abundance of the weed.

Public schools close for a week in December as one death is reported at Scott from diphtheria.

1910

Halley's Comet is visible through the months of April and May.

Plans are made for a county library. Lack of rain hurts the wheat.

It was reported that nearly 90,000 eggs were marketed from the county in a week's time.

The Standard asks for a weed-clearing effort in LaGrange. "There is no use talking about civic righteousness without an uplift of the dog fennel."

The Boy Scouts of America is founded.

1911

A resolution for 1911. "I will make at least one apple tree bear good, sound fruit."

A medium comes to town to materialize those in the spirit world.

A case of tuberculosis is diagnosed in the county.

The Topeka Depot is destroyed by fire.

The first transcontinental air flight is made—with numerous stops. It began September 17 and ended November 5.

1912

Blizzard stops traffic, sends mercury to 14 below zero.

It is the last year for cutting ice out of Oliver Lake. About 600 tons will be stored for summer use.

Woodruff school burns.

A February blizzard tops January's. School immobilized.

The prize-winning team of horses in the Corn School turns out to be a Steuben County team. Protests are filed.

Local elections and Carl Mishler, Democrat candidate for treasurer reports campaign expenses of 50 cents. Republican George W. Hoff wins with a \$75 campaign.

1913

Four oak logs are cut which scale 10,000 feet and sell for \$35 a thousand feet.

Charles P. Denning, R.R.1, LaGrange carrier, finally gives up his buggy and now drives a Ford machine.

June frost - gardens damaged.

The Ontario dam is to supply electricity for Wolcottville.

Gene Stratton Porter, who has gained nation-wide acclaim as an author, is to speak at Corn School.

1914

A U. S. skirmish with Mexico attracts some recruits from the county.

Topeka announces an addition to its high school.

Wheat crop in Clearspring Township is a failure.

Badger is caught in the county, will be exhibited at Corn School.

Wind wrecks circus tent at Sturgis. One dead, several critically injured.

The Standard said: "If women could vote, some of them say there would be no wars. We don't know about women being the doves of peace. Women are sinners like men. The more people there are in politics, the more chance we all will have."

The Ford Motor Company raised its basic wage rates from \$2.40 for a nine-hour day to \$5 for an eight hour day.

1915

Milk increases to 8 cents a quart in the county and wheat soars to \$1.25 a bushel.

Fire destroys Sycamore Hall in Topeka. An aeroplane appears at Corn School.

It is the year when the British ship, Lusitania, was sunk by a German submarine and 128 American passengers were lost.

1916

Shoes going up in price from 15 to 20 cents a pair.

Because of more and more automobiles appearing on LaGrange streets, an ordinance is enacted setting a speed limit of 15 miles an hour in town and instructing drivers to keep to the right and turn square corners.

Free mail carrier service is begun.

1917

Indiana women were enfranchised and will vote in the town election.

As World War I intensified in Europe, the U.S. passes a conscription law and the first troops are dispatched to Europe.

Prices of movies range from 11 to 22 cents here.

1918

Record blizzard sweeps country. County reports 20 below zero and impassable drifts. Mail carriers returned to their horses and sleighs, storing their automobiles until spring.

LaGrange County celebrates with the rest of the nation the armistice and the end of the war in Europe.

1919

New Carnegie Library opens in LaGrange. Army worm invades county crops. To add to the farmer's plight a hail storm strikes, perforating roofs, breaking hundreds of windows, destroying corn crops. Gardens are ruined and fruit trees are stripped. Hail stones two and one-half inches in diameter were reported. Thirty-two street light globes were broken.

Air mail is established between Chicago and Cleveland and pilots are following the Wabash Railroad between the two cities.

1920

Influenza hits the county and several deaths are reported.

Roads are drifted shut in a freak Easter Sunday blizzard.

In April tornado sweeps through the area, missing LaGrange County, but claiming some 40 lives in the state—two at Orland.

The first regular licensed radio broadcasting is begun.

(Continued on page 4)

Since 1905



Frurip-May Funeral Home

309 W. Michigan Street
LaGrange, Indiana

Quality Delano Monuments & Markers

Looking Back Through The Years

Hail and cinch bugs plague farmers in the county.

An automobile license station is to be opened at Detroit and Central Streets in LaGrange. County numbers will run from 279,500 to 282,000.

1923

The dollar of 1913 now buys 63 cents worth of goods...inflation described as the most rapid in our history.

Effort gets underway to build a gym at the LaGrange School. It is expected to cost \$12,000.

The county's first paved street is West Central Avenue. The east-west highway through town is being called the new transcontinental highway.

The first cesarean section operation is performed at the community hospital.

LaGrange residents read of an earthquake and fire in Tokyo and Yokohama in which 225,000 are killed.

1924

The LaGrange basketball team "swamps" Fort Wayne Central Catholic, 21-10, in one of the fastest games seen on the local floor this season.

Oil well drilled in Ashley and it is a producer.

About a dozen Klansmen from Auburn staged a rally on the courthouse lawn but drew a pitifully small audience.

The county assessor reports the county has 2,140 cars and trucks.

The price of milk goes up to 12 cents a quart. A turkey dinner at the Central Cafe—with all the trimmings—is advertised at \$1.

The year ends with a destructive sleet storm which disrupted telegraph service and knocked out electricity for several days.

1925

The year began with an arctic cold wave which sent temperatures to 28 below zero.

In March an earthquake rattled dishes, moved tables and chairs in LaGrange County homes. It was reported the quake was centered off Maine in the Atlantic Ocean and shook up the northeastern part of the country.

The County escaped the wrath of a spring tornado which hit four states, including southern Indiana. The town of Griffin in Posey County was left with more than 100 dead and only four houses remaining intact.

The site of the old county courthouse in Howe—the public square—is offered to sale to the highest bidder.

Crissy, the Skunk Woman of near Howe, passed away after an illness of several months. She had become something of a tourist attraction living in a modest house with a number of skunks which had become her pets.

In December the LaGrange School Gym was finished and a community celebration was held.

1926

Bids are asked for the building of a new gym at the Lima School.

Officials report nearly 4,000 children of school age living in the county.

Workmen dismantling the old Squire Smith home in Mongo found \$140 in gold coins secreted in the roof. The oldest bore the date of 1825.

Mint farmers are storing their peppermint oil in bank vaults until the price rises from the \$8-to-\$10 now being paid to the \$20 pound paid last year.

Col. Theodore Roosevelt will be one of the main speakers at this year's Corn School.

LaGrange is classified as a city by the Post Office Department.

The European Corn Bore invades the county and the Midwest. Part of county is quarantined. No corn may be shipped out of the quarantined areas.

1927

Sheriff Clarence E. Minich opened his administration on New Year's Day by pouring 240 gallons of beer into the sewer at Spring Street. The beer was seized from two "booze runners" from Detroit.

County feeds more sheep than any other in the United States according to a statement from a Chicago meat packing representative.

The county tax rate is \$1.30 on each \$100 of assessed valuation.

(Continued on page 5)



(Continued from page 3)

1921

John D. Rerick, Civil War surgeon, community leader, and publisher of The LaGrange Standard, died March 4 at Irene Byron Sanitarium.

Diphtheria and scarlet fever hit the county.

Members of the Amish Church inform school officials they are keeping their children at home because of the danger to morals posed by basketball uniforms of students.

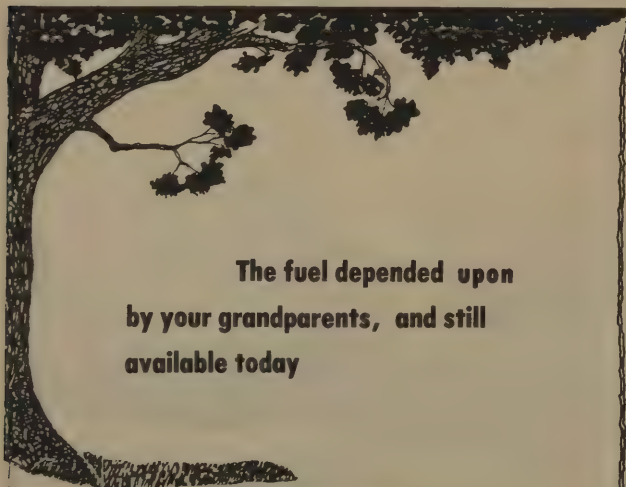
An explosion at a Mongo area home revealed two stills, 8 gallons of half-finished whiskey and 4 mash barrels.

1922

Four radiophones are now in LaGrange and operators report hearing things from all over the world.

The old Stroup & Co. sawmill building is converted into an ice house, holding 1,000 tons of ice hauled by train from Sylvan Lake.

Four deaths at the Lakeside Hospital in Kendallville. A nurse from South Milford was among the victims.



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Employees & Office Building

As we are now



Farver Lumber Company, Inc.

Founded in 1889

Shipshewana

LaGrange



Looking Back Through The Years

(Continued from page 4)

The LaGrange National Bank is closed by order of the board of directors and placed in receivership.

County residents read about the exploits of Charles Lindbergh who flew alone across the Atlantic—3,160 miles in 33 and one-third hours.

1928

Year begins with a blizzard, blockading roads and stranding several motorists in the county.

A \$60,000 bond issue is approved for the construction of a new school at Honeyville.

The State Bank of Lima is held up and robbers make off with \$3,000 in cash.

The LaGrange National Bank makes a 40 percent distribution to creditors and later the building is sold to the LaGrange State Bank.

South Milford is swept by a furious fire which destroyed 14 buildings, the most destructive fire in the history of the county.

The LaGrange Standard passes into new hands. After a half-century in the Rerick family the paper is sold to Paul M. Riddick, Greenville, Michigan.

Influenza epidemic causes churches to cancel services, school to close.

1929

It was the year of the stock market crash, and the beginning of what was to become known as the Great Depression.

In LaGrange County, the weather caused havoc in the first months of the new year beginning with a cold snap and including later an ice storm.

Local officials were notified that Ind. 9 would be routed down Detroit Street.

The LaGrange Publishing Company was formed to publish both The Standard and The News.

County Amish leaders petitioned the State Legislature to permit their children to drop out of school at the eighth grade.

Notre Dame Football Coach Knute Rockney speaks to the Local Chamber of Commerce.

A vigilante or citizen guard group is being trained in LaGrange County to cope with bank bandits.

Driver's licenses will now be required by the state. Fee is 50 cents for a three-year license.

A tornado sweeps through the county, tearing off roofs and uprooting hundreds of trees.

The new Bir Hotel is opened at Poplar and Central.

A third state highway is planned in LaGrange County. Ind. 3 is to be extended from Kendallville to U.S. 20.

Hijackers make off with booze and cars near LaGrange. The rum runners complain to sheriff about the "lawlessness" in the county.

The Amish were given authority to have their own schools. The first Boy Scout organizations are formed in the county.

1930

Telephone company moves into a new, modern plant in LaGrange.

The Woodruff store, after 83 years of business, is closed.

Spring blizzard hits March 27.

It is reported that Stroh and South Milford homes are being robbed by wandering gypsies in a high-powered car.

LaGrange County loses population according to the last census. The figures show 13,787 county residents, down 212 from the previous census.

Wolcottville's new school is dedicated.

Chamber of Commerce suggests a stoplight be installed at Ind. 9 and U.S. 20.

1931

The Plyley candy firm reports 40 tons of candy sold in 1930.

Banks are beginning to have problems. The Topeka Bank closed its doors for a time, but reopened with the condition that restrictions be made on withdrawals. The South Milford State Bank closed its doors and entered into liquidation. A 25 percent distribution is made on deposits.

Black measles hit county. Seven deaths reported among school age children, including three children of an Amish family in 10 days.

LaGrange resident Alton Merriman gains a reputation as a good samaritan, feeding some 440 transients in two months. He is helped with donations from LaGrange County residents.

LaGrange County schools graduate 115 students.

Dry weather prompts town board to ban lawn sprinkling.

Indictments returned by grand jury against officials of LaGrange County Trust Company which closed its doors in August. Charges range from embezzlement to forgery.

Knute Rockne is killed in a plane crash. The Empire State Building opens in New York.

1932

Merriman, the good samaritan, feeds 2,471 wanderers in 1931, it is reported.

Shipsheana banks follow plan of restricted withdrawals as practiced in other cities. LaGrange State Bank announces plan of restricted withdrawals.

In order to ease the burden on the taxpayers, LaGrange County schools go to an eight-month term.

Democrats sweep county, state and Nation. Franklin D. Roosevelt defeats Hoover and inaugurates the New Deal.

Overalls selling for 69 cents a pair at one LaGrange store.

Something new is planned for Corn School—a queen will be selected.

Baby Lindbergh, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lindbergh is kidnapped and later found dead.

1933

The depression deepens as the Topeka State Bank closes its doors. The state banking department calls for restricted operations in banks in 47 counties, LaGrange County included. Steps are taken towards membership in the federal reserve system.

(Continued on page 6)



The bank in 1873

The deep imprint of the character and policies of founders John B. Howe and Samuel P. Williams is as sound a business practice today as it was in 1853

We were a good place to bank in 1853... and are just as good today

Now celebrating one hundred twenty-nine years of reputable service to the people of LaGrange County

"The Friendly Bank"

State Bank of Lima

Howe, Indiana



Member
F.D.I.C.

Member
Federal Reserve System



Looking Back Through The Years

(Continued from page 5)

All banks, which were ordered closed by President Roosevelt, were ordered reopened on March 16 for limited business.

Beer is sold in LaGrange. The Indiana General Assembly voted to modify the Volstead Act (prohibition) to permit retail sales. First beer is sold at the Bir Hotel, but only with a meal or a sandwich.

State referendum on prohibition shows 65 counties (of the state's 92 counties) vote for repeal of the Volstead Act. LaGrange County votes against repeal, but the majority carries.

An estimated 1,000 acres are planted to cantaloupe and watermelons in the county.

Delt D. Church gives his 118-acre farm in Clearspring County to the Rogers Orphans Home. Land is to be held by the county in trust forever.

Federal government will employ 250 men in LaGrange County on a WPA project lasting 90 days. Pay will be \$15 a week.

Some 3,400 pounds of relief pork is received for LaGrange County poor.

County schools closed for three weeks because of scarlet fever epidemic.

Mongo narrowly escaped destruction in a fire which destroyed several buildings.

1934

Anti-diphtheria and anti-smallpox drive is started in the county.

Orland and Pleasant Lake banks close their doors.

Eight counties, including LaGrange, form association for crop and livestock loans under the government's farm relief administration.

Wolcottville starts a drive to reopen its bank.

A reported 329 candidates file candidacies for local offices for the primary election.

Sixty men are now on the county highway department roll.

Shopping specials: Boneless beef steak, 15 cents a pound. A diamond ring? \$7.50 at Amos Jewelry.

Temperature hits 111 degrees in July.

The county is to can food for the needy.

Mongo Melon haulers are threatened with violence from Cleveland truckers who want to haul the melons to the eastern markets.

Five carloads of cattle are brought into LaGrange County to be pastured because of the extreme drought in the western states.

Eventually, nearly 25,000 head of western cattle are shipped in from the drought area.

LaGrange gets a bank. Farmers State Bank opens and announces deposit insurance. Clyde Perkins is cashier; Jada Perkins and Glenn Foster, assistant cashiers.

New Shipshewana State Bank opens with federal deposit insurance.

Chicken thievery rampant in the county.

1935

Slot machines are outlawed in the state and Sheriff Slabaugh serves notice that all such devices in the county will be seized and destroyed.

Horse collars—\$2 each at Smith Brothers Hardware.

Deputy Harry Spice hooks a 23-pound pickerel, 45 inches long at Cline Lake.

Shopping list: Tuna fish, 2 cans for 23 cents; oysters, 20 cents a pint; hamburger, 10 cents a pound; coffee, three pounds, 50 cents.

County authorities require each family on relief to maintain a garden.

Easter special—Florsheim dress shoes, \$1.98.

Flicker light is to be placed at intersection of U.S. 20 and Ind. 9.

Robert L. Pierce is employed as LaGrange County coach and English teacher.

Federal appropriation list includes money to construct a new post office in LaGrange. LaGrange Publishing Company moves to Platt Building on East Spring Street.

County is one of 28 in the state that has not enacted an ordinance permitting the sale of whisky by the drink.

July hail storm does damage to corn crops.

Leon Rose farms are sold at sheriff's sale. Rose had been a long-time community leader.

Health officials say LaGrange must

install a sewage treatment plant and stop putting raw sewage in Fly Creek.

Grant approved for a new school at Shipshewana.

Christmas shopping:—Electric train, track, engine and one car—10 cents; coaster wagon—\$1.98; a string of eight tree lights—25 cents.

A blue heron lights on power line—five towns without electricity.

New WPA jobs in LaGrange and county are started. Highway improvements totaling \$260,000 are to be done.

State says passing on a highway's yellow line is now grounds for arrest.

Residents read of the death of Will Rogers in a plane crash in Alaska.

1936

WPA road project includes 62 miles in this

county.

New street signs are erected in LaGrange. The project is sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary.

County is paralyzed by a blizzard and cold snap. Seven sub-zero days out of nine. Some 1,200 men battle snow drifts on highways. Train derailed and more than 100 men shovel all day to free it.

February has 22 days of sub-zero weather—an all-time record. Thousands of fish reported killed by the thick ice on Shipshewana Lake.

Petitions are circulated for rural electrification.

Michigan and Hawpach streets are prepared for paving.

The county's centennial queen is Marion

(Continued on page 7)

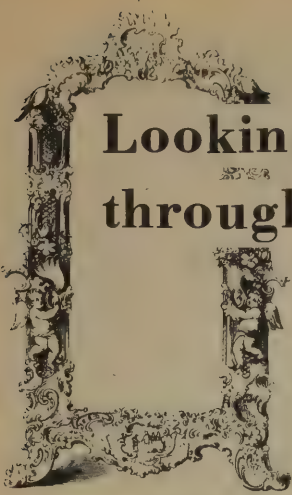
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Looking back through the years

(Continued from page 6)

Deal, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Deal. Centennial celebration, which includes a centennial stone being placed in the courthouse lawn, is declared a success.

The first wheat combine is working in county fields.

The Wainwright band will give a concert each Wednesday evening on the courthouse lawn.

Wolcottville centennial is celebrated. Wolcott and Taylor Parks are dedicated.

The Swihart Bakery is sold to Roy Paris, Sturgis, and Harry Foltz, South Bend.

The book, "Gone with the Wind," is an instant success here.

1937

Plans are made for a Catholic Church in LaGrange. It is dedicated three months later.

A police radio is installed in the office of the sheriff.

Shopping list: Overalls, \$1.59; men's dress shirts, 49 cents; or if you're looking for a new car—a Plymouth coach for \$633.

Area residents feel an earthquake March 8.

A colony of cranes is found in the county. Some 100 of the long-legged birds in the group.

Ind. 9 is opened between Rome City and U.S. 6.

High winds wreck Howe School gym.

Heign bus body factory and garage at Brighton is destroyed by fire.

County Clerk Donald Beaty says fishing licenses outnumber marriage licenses for the month of June. Some 585 permits to fish, 120 to wed.

Gypsies are "invited to leave" Shipshewana area.

Willis R. Skelly, Stroh, reports his gladiolus crop at 15 million bulbs a year.

Last of the county's civil war veterans, 94-year-old Albert Austin, South Milford, dies. He was a drummer boy.

The murder of Deputy Harry E. Spice stuns the county. Spice was killed trying to capture one Robert Shaw, who fled to LaGrange County after wounding a clerk in a grocery holdup in Kendallville. Shaw was later captured by an army of some 300 lawmen, and after being charged and convicted of murder, was electrocuted.

Glenn J. Eash was appointed as Shaw's successor.

Aviatrice Amelia Earhart Putnam was lost in the Pacific on an around-the-world flight.

1938

New Wolcottville bank opens—a branch of the Farmers State Bank.

"Forest fire" hits Lightning Hill. Blaze contained to the wooded block section of LaGrange.

A pre-Easter special: Permanents, \$2.

Ray S. Culp takes Oldsmobile Agency in LaGrange.

An April blizzard dumps 10 inches of snow on the county.

WPA crews start street work in LaGrange. WPA has built 36 miles of roads in the county since 1936.

First air mail plane from LaGrange takes 1,015 letters. J. Beatty Hostetler is the pilot.

County 4-H officials report 534 young people enrolled in clubs.

Tommy Keenan, David Fisher and their puppy entertain Shirley Temple while she and her family and bodyguards stop for a short spell in LaGrange.

A grant of \$218,500 will finance 219 miles of electric lines to 657 customers in rural LaGrange County.

Fire destroys the feed mill at Topeka. Lightning is the cause.

A \$38,000 addition is approved for the Brighton School.

Equine encephalitis affects many horses in the county.

The Emma Feed Mill is destroyed by fire.

A Needle Guild is formed to sew for the county's needy.

A bolt of lightning strikes the Methodist Church at Ontario and it is destroyed.

Site of the new federal building in LaGrange is the corner of Detroit and Wayne Streets.

State highway department takes over two roads—Vistula Road (Ind. 120) from Brighton west, and Ind. 5 from U.S. 20 north.

Orson Wells' radio dramatization of "War of the Worlds" throws scare into county residents as well as the rest of the nation.

1939

Motorists in county are warned that accidents must be reported to authorities.

Scarlet fever epidemic closes schools and cancels sports events and some church services.

"Meanest thief" steals 500 pounds of coal from a needy woman in LaGrange in the midst of a cold snap.

Needlework guild distributed 685 new garments in a year's time.

LaGrange residents surprised to see a team of Alaskan huskies pulling a dog sled through town. The driver was enroute to the World's Fair in New York.

Branch libraries are established. First one at Topeka, the next at South Milford.

Last REMC circuits in the county are energized.

Corn School to be combined with the 4-H fair and held the second week in September.

New hardware firm of Arnold Ford and Verne Schlemmer announced.

A twister hits southern part of the county, wrecking and uprooting trees.

County residents celebrated the Fourth of July with fireworks for the last time. A new state law bans the sale or use of fireworks by private citizens.

Rumblings of war in Europe. Hitler demands that Poland submit or fight. England, France, Germany and Poland prepare troops for fighting. President Roosevelt declares U.S. neutrality, but orders a limited national emergency.

Talk of war spurs market and grain and livestock prices increases.

Corn School is set back to its October date.

Canning factory at Shipshewana turns out 2,000 cases of tomatoes, a like number of green beans and 1,000 cases of custom products.

Red Cross asks for dressings for the war wounded in Europe.

County has 244 births and 164 deaths in 1939.

1940

New marriage licenses now require blood tests.

The local Legion Post celebrates its 21st birthday.

Floodlights installed at the LaGrange Athletic Park.

Orland fish hatchery completed, largest in the state.

Post office moves into new federal building.

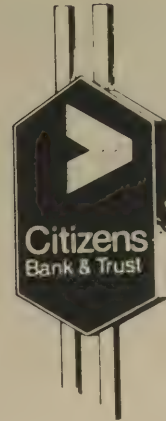
Schools in the county postpone opening dates two weeks because of the number of polio cases in the county. Public meetings also are cancelled.

Congress approves a peacetime draft and a local draft board is formed. Registration is called for men between 21 and 35.

A September freeze kills vegetation in the county.

Roosevelt sweeps to victory in the November election.

Dr. H. F. Flannigan is called for service with the medical corps.



The newest banking sign in LaGrange County.....

*We are proud to be a part of
the community and pride our
selves on being progressive.*

**Citizens
Bank & Trust
La Grange, Ind.**

Member F.D.I.C.



Roads, railroads were nerve systems of county commerce

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following account of the county's road and railroad system appeared in the 1920 History of Northeastern Indiana.

The county now has some 800 miles of roads which it maintains, but unfortunately, only minimal rail service. Of the four rail lines mentioned in this article only one—the Wabash (now Norfolk & Western) has track in place, and is operating minimally until an abandonment procedure is decided by the Interstate Commerce Commission.

The county's 79 miles of rail lines which once carried freight and passengers, has been reduced to 21 and one-half miles... and there is no certainty that the remaining track will be in place for long.

LaGrange County was unfortunate at an early day by being situated between two great east and west railway lines - The Michigan Southern on the north and Pittsburg and Fort Wayne on the south, the latter being known as the "Pennsylvania Lines." These were both early and great railway lines from the far east to Chicago, and it was many years before capital believed that other east and west lines would be a paying investment.

Before the steam roads obtained in this Northern Indiana country, wagon roads, including the plank-roads, were in evidence many years. First was the Indian trails, allowing travel in single-file, by man or horse; then came the wagon road, the stage lines, the plank-road and finally the railroad. The principal Indian trails run from Monguquinong Prairie to White Pigeon and on to Ft. Wayne, and along these trails the first wagon roads were opened up by the hardy pioneers. The Ft. Wayne road was the great highway for a number of years in the early history of the country. At Ft. Wayne was purchased most of the merchandise used by early settlers in LaGrange County, and to that city went the grain and other farm produce.

It was in the summer of 1836 that a stage line was put on from Lima to Constantine, Michigan, to which points boats then plied on the St. Joseph River. This line only continued a few years and was used mainly in transporting the land-seekers from the East. Many proposed roads figured in which LaGrange County was to be benefited, but about as many failed to materialize. In 1835 a road was established known as the Vistula (Detroit) road, which ran from the Elkhart county line through Lima, this county, and on toward Detroit. This became a much used highway. Another road from Defiance, Ohio, ran west and intersected the last mentioned road a few miles east of Lima and this became the route for most of all the

immigration in the '30s. This road was authorized, as well as the Ft. Wayne road, in 1832, by the Legislature. These lines held the traffic until the construction of the Michigan Southern Railroad. A wagon road was also established from Lima to Goshen, in 1834, and another known as the Baubauco Road, from the west line of LaGrange County, through LaGrange, and directly east to Angola, in 1837. The old Huntington Road, now called the Ligonier Road, and a few others constituted the more important wagon roads in and near LaGrange County.

In about 1850 came the era of plank-roads in Indiana. These roads became a harvest for contractors, stock-holders and lawyers. The generous citizens of LaGrange County, in common with those adjacent, took stock liberally in these plank-road corporations and wooden-road schemes. A road of this type was built from Ft. Wayne to Sturgis, Michigan. It ran from Ft. Wayne as far as Ontario, the line running from Kendallville to the Fourier Association grounds in Springfield Township, thence to Mongo, then known as Union Mills, and from there to Ontario. For three years travel on this road was splendid, but when the plank began to decay it became worse than no road. Stock-holders saw it was a failure and it was soon abandoned entirely.

Railroads of the County

The earliest attempt at building a railroad of local interest to LaGrange County was the projected Buffalo and Mississippi Railroad for which a charter was given by the Legislature in 1836-37. This road was to run through the northern tier of counties in Indiana. This county subscribed \$500 stock and also issued bonds to the extent of \$2,000. But this was soon known as a defunct enterprise. The next effort was to divert the proposed Michigan Southern Railroad line into this county. However, Southern Michigan succeeded in obtaining the prize and the road was built through that state to Chicago. The same company finally built from Toledo to Elkhart, running just to the south of this county, thus again leaving LaGrange County without a mile of railway, but a line both north and south of its territory. This state of affairs continued more than twenty years, during which two decades the products of this county were taken to market by teams and the necessary commodities there bought and brought back to the county by team at great expense.

LaGrange County's first railroad was the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad, first agitated in 1855, but not completed till about 1870. It had a land grant given to it and this was renewed in 1863-64. The first locomotive reached the town of LaGrange from Sturgis, April 11, 1870, welcomed by the roar of cannon, and band music. Flags were flung to the breezes and old men and youth shook hands as never before. A great dinner was served at the hotels for all track-layers and other railroad men. The next year the road was constructed from Sturgis to Grand Rapids.

The stock of this railroad, by the people, was almost valueless. About 1880 it had come to be quoted as worth ten cents on a dollar. However, the road was an immense benefit to the people of the county, and hence it was that but few, if indeed any stock-holder, was heard to complain at the original investment they had been induced to make.

Numerous other railway lines were projected through the county from east to west. January, 1873, a county election was held for the purpose of voting an appropriation of \$96,000 in aid of the New York and Chicago Air Line Railroad. This proposition was defeated by about 500 majority, this line was to run exactly through the center of LaGrange County a panic came on in the United States at that time and the matter there ended forever. In 1880 a narrow gauge line was agitated from Lake Michigan through this county to Toledo - nothing came of it. In the winter of 1880-81, the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Company had a line surveyed from Toledo through Angola and LaGrange, to Goshen. This with other paper roads never materialized into actual railroads.

The county now has the advantages of four railroads, as follows: The Grand Rapids and Indiana line running from north to south, with shipping points and stations located at LaGrange, Wolcottville, Lima and Valentine. This is a tributary to the Pennsylvania System and runs from Cincinnati, Ohio to Mackinac, Michigan. It is a first-class steam highway and gives shippers a direct eastern outlet to the sea-board, as well as enters the great mining and lumbering territory of Lima, Van Buren and Newbury.

The Wabash System is represented in LaGrange County by a line running from east to west through the southern tier of townships, with stations at Topeka, Eddy, Wolcottville and South Milford. This road was constructed through this county early in the '90s and about 1893 was completed.

The latest railroad venture in this county

was the construction of the St. Joseph Valley line, running from Shipshewana east through Newbury, Clay, Bloomfield, Springfield and the corner of Greenfield townships. This road was completed about 1900 and continued to operate until after the World war came on and it then went into the hands of a receiver, and that portion of the track west from the City of LaGrange, was torn up and sold to Chicago junk firms, while a new company was formed and prevented the destruction of that portion of the road east of LaGrange. While for a number of years there has been no regular passenger service on this division of the road, freight service has been maintained a few days each week to the present time - 1920.

1920 Railway Mileage of the County

According to recent reports of the county auditor for LaGrange County it is shown that the mileage, etc., of this county, in railroads was as follows:

The Grand Rapids and Indiana Company has a mileage of 16.89 in the county, divided into the various townships through which it runs as follows - Bloomfield Township, 4.98 miles; Lima Township, 4.16; LaGrange, 1.22; Johnson Township, 6.03; Wolcottville, 1.00.

The Wabash Railroad Company has 21.52 miles in this county. The mileage by townships is: Milford Township, 5.96; Johnson Township, 3.47; Clearspring Township, 6.08; Eden Township, 5.42; East Topeka, 2.5; West Topeka, 3.4.

The New York Central Railroad Company - Mileage of county 13.36. In Clay Township it was .53; in Newbury Township, 6.37; in Van Buren Township, 2.97; in Lima Township 3.49.

The St. Joseph Valley Railroad had originally a mileage in the county of 13.16 miles, but about 1915 it went into bankruptcy and all of its track was pulled up and sold as junk, while the nine miles east from LaGrange Town still remains intact.

This gives the present railway mileage of the county as 78.90 miles of main track.



Early vintage steam engine in the county

First teachers taught 'Three Rs' with willow switch in hand

There was no county organization of educational work in 1857, except that persons desiring to teach were required to obtain a license from a board of three examiners. In 1861 the legislature provided for one examiner in each county, an office which was held in succession by J.H. Danseur, George A. Mark, W.H. Hemenway, Rufus Patch. Under the law of 1865 the examiners were Rufus Patch, A. Fitz Randolph, William Cathcart, S.D. Crane and Alfred Bayliss, in succession. Bayliss was the first county superintendent, when something like the present system was begun in 1873, and he and his successors, S.D. Crane, E.T. Cosper, E.G. Machan and H.S. Gilhams, have contributed effectively to the advancement of the local system of education.

Superintendent Cosper wrote in 1876, "There are employed in the schools 117 teachers at an average cost of \$36 per month, without board, and \$29 when they board round." In 1892 the number of teachers was 130.

Fifty years ago there was little money for educational purposes, and the county school term was very short. There were no good roads in the winter time, and the youngsters, in going to the log school went through the woods and the fields and the muddy lanes. The overshoe had not then come into use, so the children sat with wet and cold feet most of the day. Their clothing was mostly made at home from material raised on the farm, and was scant and ill-fitting. The school house had no desks. The children sat on backless benches.

The teacher was often a fit counterpart to the school house. He ruled with a beech rod, each day cut new and green from the neighboring tree. Between him and the "scholars" there was constant warfare. Sometimes an open fight in the school room resulted in the defeat and consequent disgrace and dismissal of the school master.

There were no school books in those days worth mentioning - no blackboards, no steel pens. The goose had to furnish the quills from which the pens were made. The jack-knife of the school master was the factory producing the instruments of chirography for those who would know the mystery of writing.

The three principal branches (in addition to the beech branches in the school master's hand) were reading, writing and arithmetic. Some few studied geography when the teacher had a sufficient knowledge to warrant the venture. The spelling in the school was the branch that yielded the most enjoyment and produced the best results. That was the last lesson of the day, and all that were far enough advanced to take a hand in it went at it with a vim.

They were permitted to "study out loud," and they did it with a yell that sometimes could be heard for a half mile. When the time came for recitation they all stood up in a row, sometimes reaching half way round the room. Each one knew the place he had in the row the night before. If one misspelled a word he was turned down by the one that had it right, and as a consequence the good spellers were at the head of the class and the poor ones at the foot.

This was the only chance for promotion and distinction in the whole business of the school, and a generous rivalry was the result.

In addition to the discomforts of the school room, the schools had a contagious disease, which a country doctor of the times very sagely declared to be "cutaneous disease of the skin." In plain words, free from technical mystery, it was the itch. It was very prevalent and very disagreeable. It often brought a whole school "to the scratch." Many of the scholars wore small sacks of asafetida or sulphur around their necks to ward off the contagion. The otherwise disagreeable odor of the school room was greatly intensified by this attempt at prevention.

The early form of development of the country school system was in the direction of building a school for every neighborhood. The first log houses gave way rapidly to neat frame buildings and as the work went on of bringing the school to the doors of the home, schools multiplied until there were about one hundred and twenty of these school houses, in each of which teachers must,

perforce, undertake the teaching of every branch required. But as long ago as twenty years there began to be a reduction in the number of schools, not extensive, but enough to indicate a change or at least a check in policy. Johnson township was the pioneer in the new policy, which is one of consolidation of schools and transportation of pupils to and from their homes, and the result there may be taken as illustrating what has been done in nearly all the townships. In Johnson the new system became opportune by reason of the number of dilapidated buildings that made the erection of new buildings in the districts or transportation of the pupils necessary. The incorporation of the town of Wolcottville, on the southern line of the township, took the only high school out of the township system of free instruction. In view of these conditions Trustee Henry Eshelman decided to try the experiment of centralization. He abandoned one school about the year 1899 and the satisfaction expressed persuaded him to abandon another the next year, and one more in the third year. His successor abandoned two more schools, and in 1904 there remained but two rural schools in a township where there were formerly nine.

At Woodruff, an interior point, a brick school house of three rooms, with basement and furnace, was built in 1901, and this accommodates a common school of eight grades and township high school. The other high school and common school is at Valentine, in a building erected before the year 1900. Each of these combined schools has a principal and sufficient force of subordinate teachers. The results are more time for teaching, better teachers, better attendance and increased school spirit.

Greenfield township is another example. There were ten school districts and many schools. Now there is a handsome four-room school building at Brighton, a village of less than one hundred population, in which is installed a graded school and high school, with a total enrollment of 125. The rest of the township has four other schools, with a combined enrollment of 102. "The advantages of the consolidation may be stated thus," writes F.G. Smelzy, principal of the Brighton school. "That by the employment of one janitor, three hackmen, three grade teachers and one high school principal, the 102 grade pupils have the advantage of better equipped school surroundings and better instruction which better grading and fewer classes per teacher makes possible, while twenty three pupils from the whole township have the benefit of a high school, a diploma from which will admit them into the junior year of any commissioned high school. Besides the above the 125 pupils of the whole school have the advantage of a training in patriotism and citizenship which is developed by the submergence of self and by the devotion to the school and its organizations, such as base ball, foot ball and basket ball teams, and literary entertainments, made possible by the consolidation."

Herbert S. Gilhams, county superintendent since 1899, has aided materially in the organization of the new system, in which he is an enthusiastic believer. According to his statement for the years 1893-94 thirty-eight schools had been abandoned in the county, with a savings of thirty-one in the number of teachers. The saving of salaries of teachers was over \$10,000 and in maintenance over \$2,000. The new expense was the twenty-nine hacks used in conveying 428 pupils, for which the annual expenditure was about \$6,000. Hence it appeared that the change to consolidation and transportation effected an annual saving of nearly \$7,000.

Now, the county schools, each in charge of one teacher, number but sixty-one, thirty six of which have not yet found it opportune to adopt the new system. In the other seven townships twenty-five schools are sufficient. The county school houses now in use are all of modern construction, generally of what is known as the Baker type, also generally of brick, and costing from \$1,000 to \$1,500.

The greatest number of hacks in use for any one school is seven for the South Milford school. The hacks are closed conveyances, provided with blankets, heaters, etc., for the comfort of the children, and great care is exercised in the selection of drivers.

The system of consolidation has aided in the evolution of the township high schools. Township free high school education is a development of the last decade, particularly of the last four or five years. In 1893, the high schools of the county were those at LaGrange, Lima and Wolcottville, which had succeeded the seminaries of fifty years ago. Of these Lima is a township high school, maintained in a village of about seven hundred population, and about sixty per cent of the school attendance being from outside the village. In 1894 a building was erected at Shipshewana by the township trustee adequate for a township high school and graded school and another handsome building for a joint high school was built at Topeka by the trustees of Eden and Clearspring townships.

Since 1900, six township high schools have been built, and two remodeled. In VanBuren township the high school is at the village of Scott, in Springfield two, at Mongo and Brushy Prairie, in Milford two, at South Milford and Stroh in Bloomfield township,

Thus there are in the county fourteen high schools, in all and the buildings for these schools have cost \$145,000. This fact in itself is sufficient to indicated the intelligence, wealth and enterprise of the county. All township high schools do not provide a four years' course or prepare pupils for entrance to college, but they have a valuable two years' course and a diploma which admits the pupils to the junior class in a commissioned high school. The terms of these combined grade and high schools is eight or nine months, the term of the country single room schools generally seven months. Clay township, adjoining LaGrange, is the only township without a high school.

The commissioned high schools, whose graduates are admitted to the state

university without further examination, are at LaGrange, Lima, Shipshewana and Topeka. Three of these are maintained by the townships, a fact of LaGrange county educational progress which is not equalled anywhere else in Indiana. The Lima high school was the first township high school commissioned in Indiana, which means that it was the first high school outside an incorporated town, which provided a course of such scope and thoroughness that its graduates were prepared to go on with the first years' work in the university.

The maintenance of this system of public education, including the salaries of teachers, requires an expenditure of about \$85,000 annually. There is no indebtedness on account of schools except in two townships. The total number of teachers employed in the county is 126, of which 94 are in the grades below high school.

Thirty pages of the last report of the state superintendent of public instruction are devoted to a description of the LaGrange county high school and transportation system. Pictures of the schools and an exposition of the results were shown at the St. Louis fair, and plates illustrating the LaGrange county system have been printed in the reports of state superintendents as models for imitation as far west as Oklahoma and as far south as Louisiana.

The total county enumeration of persons of school age in 1906 was 4,431, the enrollment was 3,718, and the average attendance was 2,943. Of these totals there were enrolled in non-commissioned high schools 186, in commissioned high schools, LaGrange 120, Lima 73, Topeka, 73, Shipshewana 32, a total high school enrollment of 488. The graduates of the common schools numbered 147, the graduates of high schools numbered 94, figures which indicate that seventy-five per cent of the children who enter high school persist to completion of the course.



One-room schools abandoned in consolidation

George Wolcott's town grows up

The first settlers moved into the Wolcottville area in 1834, finding it to be what one early settler described as "...a tangled wilderness, filled with wild animals and semi-wild men."

The lakes and lowlands made the area ideal for hunting and fishing and large contingents of Potawatomi made their summer homes on the lakes.

The abundance of game (and the prospects for fur trading) did not escape the attention of French traders who set up a trading post in the Tamaracks in 1833. They did a booming business with the Indians and

the first settlers since the area teemed with deer, and beaver, and an occasional bear.

The first collection of settlers began at Wright's Corner (Woodruff) when Levi Wright erected a cabin in 1834. Although Wright didn't encourage neighbors, other cabins were built in the area and a store was opened. Wright steadfastly refused to sell plots to tradesmen and other commercial interests, however.

A post office was established at Wright's Corners in 1835, the first in the area.

Township created in 1837

The county commissioners created John-

son Township in 1837, the year an Easterner, George Wolcott, arrived in the county and decided he would put up a sawmill on the Little Elkhart. In the years to follow, that venture turned into a sort of frontier conglomerate.

In short order, Wolcott was involved in seven business enterprises, including grain milling, sawing, blacksmithing, merchandising, coopering (making of barrels), farming and the manufacturing of potash. It is said, too, that Wolcott had an interest, at least, in a distillery, where many of the barrels went.

Wolcott probably had some 20 men working for him at one time and he erected some 15 buildings in the village to be purchased or rented by his employees.

In 1849, the village, given the name of Wolcott's Mills, was platted—33 lots. A post office had been established the year before.

Influential men

Like Howe, the growth of Wolcottville was largely the result of a few pioneer settlers. Wolcott, who came to Indiana via Connecticut, his native state, was from an influential eastern family. His great grandfather was governor of Connecticut in the mid-1700s.

Also wielding considerable influence in Wolcottville's early development was Philo Taylor, owner of a large tract of land in the area, and L. L. Wildman, a merchant and financier.

One of Wolcott's main concerns as he developed his frontier enterprises was the education of his children. School houses in the area were rustic cabin affairs and the curriculum was very basic, at best.

Wolcott wrote to the National Board of Education in the East and requested a governess-teacher be recommended for his family. Miss Susan Griggs responded and was hired to tutor the one school-age child in the Wolcott family.

Her presence attracted the attention of other village residents and they asked if she might also teach their children. One of Wol-

cott's houses was fitted for a school where she taught during the winter of 1851-52.

In 1852, Wolcott built the "Wolcottville Seminary" and a boarding house for out-of-town students. It was originally conceived as a school for young women only, but soon became co-educational.

Miss Griggs taught here for 17 years, often with one or two assistants, sometimes as many as 115 students. The curriculum included basic education, plus courses in Latin, German, French, painting and music.

When the State authorized secondary schools as part of the public education program, it spelled the downfall of the seminary. It closed in 1868.

Railroad brings growth

With the completion of the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad through Wolcottville, came new growth, both in population and in businesses. In the late 1800s, Philo Taylor listed the following enterprises in the town:

An exchange bank, four dry goods stores, one hardware and tin store, three drug, grocery and notion stores, a steam sawmill, two steam planing mills, a flouring mill, two wagon and carriage shops, three blacksmith shops, two cabinet shops, and a number of home carpenters. Also a printing press issuing 700 papers weekly, and two churches, the Baptist and Methodist.

Wheat, purchased and shipped out of Wolcottville by rail, totalled 49,000 bushels in 1875-76.

Town renamed

Wolcottville, renamed from Wolcott's Mills in 1864, continued to prosper for a time. But as the industrial age began to reach into the county and manufacturing plants were established, the community failed to induce enough companies to locate there to insure continued growth.

It has become, instead, a trading area for the large numbers of seasonal lake dwellers in the area.

Perhaps another entrepreneur like George Wolcott will come along and the town will bloom again.

Main St., Looking South, Wolcottville, Ind.



Wolcottville's Main street looking south

College Hill, Wolcottville, Ind.



The area called 'College Hill'



Town's bandsmen wore derbies



Looking north on an unpaved main street



Model Ts replaced horses and buggies



Wolcottville's bridge in an earlier day



REPLACEMENT DISTRIBUTION CENTER
SEALED POWER
CORPORATION
LaGrange, Indiana

South Milford grew up along the old Plank Road in mid 80s

Were it not for the Old Plank Road, running from Fort Wayne to Sturgis, the Village of South Milford probably would not have been established.

Milford Township in its earliest days was a jumble of lakes, marshes and woodlands where settlers found some of the most abundant game in the county. Deer and wild turkey were plentiful and it was not unusual to see a bear ambling through the oak woods.

The earliest settlers who moved in 1832 were a rough and tumble lot who found hunting more to their liking than farming. Stores and mills were some distance away from their log cabin homes. A good grist was a bagful and a few acres a large field.

Families lived on game, some pork, cornbread and potatoes. All else was a delicacy on the pioneer table.

Whisky a 'Staple'

There was another "staple" - whisky. The LaGrange County history of 1882 relates: "Everybody drank whisky. Not necessarily to excess but to realize the exhilarating effects. It was taken to cool in hot weather and to warm in cold; to drown sorrow and assuage the grief of privation; to assist digestion, and to strengthen the weak. Mothers drank it to gain strength to endure; children were given it to make them healthy and strong. All took it because it was regarded as a panacea for all human disorders."

Consequently, fights, scuffles and brawls were not uncommon at such events as log rollings or cabin raisings. The constable and justice of the peace were kept quite busy in those days.

As more settlers arrived, it was apparent a road was needed in the area. Winding trails through the woods and marsh area no longer would suffice.

In 1848, the Plank Road was started. It consisted of fallen trees along the route, laid next to each other to provide a roadbed. Settlers then began to build their homes close to this new avenue of commerce.

The village of South Milford was laid out in 1856 on the Plank Road. A hotel and a store were among the first commercial structures in the town. A blacksmith shop, saw mill and postoffice followed.

In 1892 the Wabash Railroad, to link Detroit and Chicago, was begun. It was platted through the middle of South Milford and required a year's fill work to cross the small valley in which the village was situated. The railroad was nearly enough completed for passengers to run to the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893.

Depot Built

A depot was erected in the village to handle small freight and passenger service. A grain elevator was soon put up on the line, and a small stockyard also was established near the elevator.

The Gay '90s brought new prosperity to the town and a sizeable commercial center grew along its main street. The merchants went together to erect an opera house which had a basement dance hall; first floor auditorium and stage and a third floor meeting hall. The merchants then contracted for entertainment which ranged from lectures to band concerts.

In 1914, electricity came to South Milford. An electrician, Leo D. Holley set up a production plant, distribution board and wired most of the homes and businesses in town.

And the town got a newspaper, first published as the "South Milford Help," then the South Milford Record.

The local grade school was expanded to become a high school, too.

Fire Erupts

On July 31, 1929, the town's budding prosperity literally went up in smoke. Seventeen downtown buildings were destroyed in a blaze which swept through the commercial district like a whirlwind of flames.

The town never quite recovered. On top of the fire disaster, it was determined that there wasn't enough tax base to support the high school any longer and students were bused to Kendallville for their secondary

education.

Then the Wabash railroad announced in 1933 it was abandoning passenger service, adding another blow to the town's economy.

The village, even during its heyday, was unable to attract industry to the area and that also helped to contribute to its economic woes.

Today, J. O. Mory and Sons, a contracting, hardware and appliance firm remains the town's main business.



Victory arch celebrated WWI's end

1946.....our 50th Anniversary



Brown's Drug Store

Pharmacy • Cosmetics • Cards • Candies • Convalescent Aids • Electronics

LaGrange, Indiana

Title companies, deed records important part of history

One of the businesses of LaGrange County which has received little attention over the years and is not generally understood by the public is the abstract and title business. The Shepardson Abstract Co. was one of the pioneers in the abstract business and involved several members of the Shepardson family. Samuel, son Kit and daughter (Ella) Pearl Shepardson Will were the backbone of the Shepardson Abstract Co. and Mary Jane Will Sell, Pearl's daughter born in 1900, became a partner in the firm upon graduation from high school. Samuel Shepardson also served in County government and was Auditor at the time our present Court House was erected.

It was a tedious task to "take off" all the instruments recorded in the Recorder's and Clerk's offices and post them to a set of tract books and other books relating to Wills, Estates and Guardianships. The records were handwritten until about 1901. From 1901 to 1975 all records were typed and at that time the Recorder's Office began microfilming all instruments. The indexes were and still are handwritten. The Shepardson tract books contained data by location on all rural transactions from the "Government Entry," when they were purchased from the U.S. Government, to around 1937, covering about 100 years. Town books were also posted by lot numbers from the dates the towns were platted.

The Shepardsons had a desk in the Recorder's vault as their Court House headquarters. It was from this desk that Pearl Shepardson Will worked for many years, copying each transaction by location in note books and later posting it in the books in her office across the street from the Court House, now the location of Fred Hartz's law office. Pearl's living quarters were upstairs with daughter Mary Jane sharing them for quite a number of years. Mary Jane used an Oliver typewriter and was an excellent typist. For several years Hazel Weir also did a lot of the typing. We were also told that some of the most uniform and legible indexing in the Recorder's records were done by Miss Weir, who is now a resident of Miller's Merry Manor. Pearl Shepardson Will died February 4, 1954.

During the early 1940's Mary Jane became interested in the real estate business and eventually this became her full time occupation. She married Robert J. Sell and they both sold real estate, forming the Will-Sell Realty Co. which was in business until just recently. During the time Robert Sell was in the military Marjorie Helmut assisted Mary Jane with her abstract and other work. Mary Jane Sell died in 1968 and Robert in 1980.

Another family who had a long history in the abstract business was LeRoy Foster and sons Merrill D. and Ralph L. They were also lawyers so they made deeds, mortgages and other papers that might appear in abstracts such as those pertaining to probating estates, foreclosures, partition suits, quiet title suits etc. Mildred Sweitzer Laughlin was the typist and office assistant for the Fosters for many years. They also maintained a set of tract books by geographical location. LeRoy Foster died in 1938 and Ralph L. in 1975, although they had not been in the abstract business for some years before that. Merrill D. and daughter Nancy now reside in Indianapolis.

Because most of the attorneys were located in the Town of LaGrange, we surmise that many deeds and other legal papers prepared in other parts of the county were made by notary publics; some of whom were George D. Searing in Lima (now Howe), Levi L. Miller in Shipshewana, Dail Seagly, A. W. Ritter and Sam Kohl in Topeka and Charles Hulbert, A. A. Snyder and Harrison A. Shobe in Wolcottville. It was not necessary to have the preparer's name on instruments until recently. It has been made a law in Indiana that the name of the preparer be shown and that it was a practice of law to prepare any instrument in regard to the exchange of, or other transactions regarding, real estate. Only the owners of said real estate are exempt from this provision, but hardly anyone takes advantage of it, relying on attorneys to prepare the instruments in a proper manner. Bert Opie had the distinction of being our local Justice of the Peace for many years and worked out of the Sheriff's office in the

Court House, now occupied by the County Assessor. His name also appeared on many deeds.

Some of the first attorneys in LaGrange County included John B. Hanan, who at one time was a Federal Court Judge in Panama, James Story Drake, later Judge of the Elkhart-LaGrange Circuit, J. M. VanFleet, an attorney from DeKalb County who later became judge of the circuit including LaGrange County, George A. Cutting, Otis L. Ballou, James E. and Miles R. McClaskey, W. C. Glasgow, Francis D. Merritt, J. B. and C. A. Wade, Andrew Ellison, James M. Kennedy, Joseph D. Ferrall, James L. Drake and John B. Howe our first resident attorney (see the 1893 atlas for a more complete list). Clyde C. Carlin from Steuben County came in 1927 and was the Judge for the Steuben-LaGrange Circuit Court until his death in 1948. Donald Hunter came to LaGrange in the mid 1940's and was associated with Carl Willard, and after the death of Judge Carlin was judge of the Circuit Court, and he is now a justice of the Supreme Court of Indiana. Then there was Frank J. Dunten and his son Paul, Grandson Jack (who also served LaGrange County as judge) and grandson-in-law Richard Detar. Others were William B. Duff, C. L. Robinson, Herman Haskins, William Ballou and Solon B. Selleck. Gerald W. Fisher arrived in September 1931 and was associated with the Duff law firm, later joined by C. L. Robinson, and Marion Deal has been his office secretary since the early 1940's. LeRoy K. Schultess came in 1935 and was associated with the Dunten law firm, later moving into offices over the old Farmers State Bank building, then to the new Farmers State Bank building with Verneda Lewis as his main office secretary until recently. Over the years Clyde Schemahorn, Howard Petersen (our present judge), the late Russell Schmidt who served as Prosecuting attorney and County Court Judge, Carl Lundberg (County Court Judge), Richard Muntz, Fred Hartz, Bill Eberhard Jr., Herbert Boase, Michael Yoder (Prosecuting Attorney) and Sue Glick arrived to establish their offices in LaGrange. Michael Yoder has an office in Topeka also.

Clyde Walb, James Turley (1870's), George Eagleton (1890's) and C. C. Deal (1915) were some of the earlier County Surveyors. Then came Harley Spears who did much to lay the cornerstones of what is now the basis of the Surveyor's and County Engineer's office. Spear's work was a very important step in the county's history as it began an era of surveyed descriptions for metes and bounds tracts, which were not laid out as lots, and also for lots around lakes laid out as subdivisions. He made a set of tract sheets in 1949 for all of the county tracts and listed all the owners. There was a set in both the Auditor's and the Surveyor's offices. The set in the Auditor's office was to keep track of all conveyances as property was transferred from one person to another, and for tax purposes. The set in the Surveyor's office has been kept up to date by Spears, Richard Eash, James Russell, Edwin Houck and John Madden our present County Engineer. From these tract sheets LaGrange Title Co. was able to bring up to date their records and establish a tract system, indexed by geographical description, that has carried over into micro-film. This enables the company to run the title on any given tract, along with other office files, with accuracy and efficiency.

In 1946, Lynn and Ruthmary Roberts established LaGrange Title Co. in offices over the Old Farmers State Bank. Lynn had been associated with the Wainwright Abstract Co. of Noblesville, Indiana prior to coming to LaGrange. Many long hours of filming, photographing and filing of the records in the Recorder's and Clerk's offices were necessary to begin a filing system based on geographical location by Township and Range. The oldest records they were able to film were of transactions from the early 1800's, the County being formed in 1832. From 1946 to 1975, when the County went to Micro-filming, weekly photographing and filing was done to bring the files up to date. To supplement this filing system, after the Fosters were no longer in business, the Foster tract books were purchased by Mr. Roberts. In 1955 the Roberts purchased the old Brady home on the corner of High and

Spring Streets and moved the business to its present location. After the death of Mr. Roberts, in August of 1970, LaGrange Title Co. was purchased by Donald Diggins, the present owner, who later incorporated the business. Upon the death of Mary Jane Sell the Shepardson tract books and other books pertaining to wills, guardianships and estates were purchased by LaGrange Title, Inc.

Prior to 1946 mostly abstracts were used in LaGrange County to record the history of a certain tract of land, many beginning with the Government entry and most instruments were typed in their entirety by the Fosters or Shepardson. Mr. Roberts began a system whereby many of the instruments included in an Abstract were in a shorter form, with only the pertinent information included, this eliminating many unnecessary pages. He also began writing title insurance for Union Title Co. of Indianapolis, which took the place of long abstracts, especially on lake lots and small tracts. In later years the Union Title Co. was changed to Pioneer National Title Insurance Co. and title insurance has become a very popular method of title history among realtors, attorneys and lending institutions. Abstracts are still used by some but the title insurance business has grown considerably over the years and there are numerous title companies in operation now. In writing title insurance the same procedure is followed in checking the title back to the Government, but it is then summarized stating the pertinent information in connection with each piece of real estate as to ownership, incumbrances, easements, leases, judgments, unpaid taxes, etc. There are Owners policies and Mortgage policies and they are issued for a guaranteed amount and are in force until the property is sold again or, in the case of mortgage policies, until the mortgage is released. Instead of bringing an abstract "down to date", title insurance is issued from one owner to another and for new mortgages.

Several employees of the LaGrange Title Co. and LaGrange Title, Inc. have come and gone over the years including Dorothy Pierson, Jean Byler Glick, Phyllis Miller Eaton, Nina Swihart, Beverly Schmidt Nelson, Kathy Diggins McKinley and Pam Todd. The present force is made up of Mr. Diggins, Marjorie Helmut, who began working there in June 1957, Mrs. Max "Peachie" Guldin, who came in the spring of 1971, Suellyn Gitt Mickem who came in August 1975 and the newest addition of Melissa Herron who just recently began her duties there. Mrs. Ruthmary Roberts Coffin assisted in the work for a number of years and JoAnn Diggins is called in for office duty occasionally when extra help is needed.

In 1974, Northeastern Title Co. was established with a title plant based on approximately a 30-year filing system, which was permitted by the Indiana Land Title Association. Tom Rofkahr, a former employee of LaGrange Title Co. was the first manager. It is now managed by Steve Wapes with Marge (Mrs. Gerald) Fisher as office assistant.

Abstracts and title insurance are mainly used to show ownership and all pertinent information necessary to consummate a change of ownership of property or real estate and they are necessary to the lending institution for maintaining proper records of mortgages, etc. If done accurately, they will also show any discrepancies in the location of the property such as over-laps and/or real estate and they are necessary to the lending institutions for maintaining proper records of mortgages, etc. If done accurately, they will also show any discrepancies in the location of the property such as over-laps and/or mistakes in descriptions if any occur. Mr. Roberts used to say that he thought he spent as much time doing corrective work for people as he did in actual abstracting. He also said "As Abstracters we are custodians of men's rights to use the earth." With the establishing of the numbering system and the diligent work of Deloris Houck on the transfer records, with the cooperation of the local surveyors and the county engineer, most of these discrepancies will be corrected. Also the requirements of the County Plan Commission as pertains to surveys will help to eliminate mistakes in descriptions. There is an Indiana law that only registered surveyors are to write descriptions.

It takes a lot of cooperation on the part of abstract companies, Court House officials, surveyors, attorneys, realtors and all the people involved in real estate transactions to insure the proper ownership of some of our most important possessions, our homes and businesses.

(The foregoing article was written by Marjorie Helmut from personal association with many of the people mentioned above, beginning in January 1933 when she became the first salaried Deputy Recorder. Her father, Fred Hosteller, born and raised near Emma Lake in Eden Township, was elected County Recorder in November 1932 and became the first salaried Recorder. Prior to that date the Recorder received a certain portion of the recording fees and paid their own duty. Some of the research and other information for this article was furnished by Richard Tjarks, V. Pres. of LaGrange County Historical Society, and by other long time residents of LaGrange County.)



Ready for a Sunday afternoon drive



For many years, Shishewana State Bank has been serving this area by providing professional financial counseling and account management to you, our customers.

Our philosophy of banking, summed up in the words "we listen," has served us well and has contributed not only to our growth but to the growth of the community and its people.

We invite you to come into the bank at any time to discuss your financial needs with one of our officers. As always, their insight, experience, and expertise will provide you with the most professional, personal banking service available. And, as always, "we listen."



SHISHEWANA • LAGRANGE • TOPEKA • WOLCOTTVILLE
MEMBER F.D.I.C.

A 1907 account of earliest county telephone systems

In 1886 Charles S. Griffith built a telegraph line to Middlebury and Vista, connecting with the Western Union Telegraph company. Mr. Griffith was then a printer in the Standard office, and had been experimenting in Telegraphy for several years, making his own instruments at the start, stringing short lines and learning the language of the key and sounder. There was already the telegraph line of the Grand Rapids and Indiana railroad, but an opportunity presented itself to bring in the Western Union line, which Griffith was not slow to grasp. In 1891 he put up another line to Lima and Sturgis. In 1897 the same enterprising electrician began the introduction of a telephone system, establishing a line by which telephone communication could be had with Lima and Sturgis. In the following year he began to connect residences or business houses with his centrals and made his line a part of the Bell system. Forming a partnership with Amos Long, the firm put in two hundred telephones in 1899, and from year to year the number was increased to four hundred.

The first telephone line from LaGrange was established by A. H. Johnston in association with C. S. Griffith and others between LaGrange and Rome City. Mr. Johnston was one of the first to appreciate the benefits to come from the general use of telephones. The Rome City line was sold to Weatherford and Inks, but Johnston determined to try the experiment of putting in a telephone system in the county independent of the Bell company. M. L. Johnston joined him in the enterprise. They started out with fifteen subscribers in LaGrange headed by George Timmis. The exchange was opened with Miss Carrie Skeer in charge at a salary of \$2.00 a week, and with an increase of salary she continued to serve and for some years afterward. In the work of extending

the lines into the country Johnston Brothers were greatly assisted by the farmers, who donated money, put up poles, etc., and in every way aided to make the project a success. The Johnston proposition was to give the farmer a phone for one dollar a year, then regarded by telephone men as impossible. Johnston Brothers believe they were the first in the United States to offer telephones to the agricultural community in opposition to the Bell people. The latter threatened suit repeatedly but the Johnstons persisted, begin advised by eminent lawyers that they had good fighting grounds, also being backed by telephone manufacturers. Their one dollar proposition was ridiculed by men of experience in the business, yet they persisted and have at least proved it possible, for it is now the usual rate for farmers, though companies usually wish it associated with a large city business. The Johnstons continued to operate their system for years, establishing lines to Sturgis, Lima, Wolcottville, Topeka, South Milford and Stroh, and operating a system with about six hundred subscribers. Finally the Northern Indiana and Southern Michigan Telephone, Telegraph and Cable company was formed, with Johnson Brothers, Dr. A. J. Hostetler, Rollin Ellison and Alice Ellison as stockholders. The Shipshewana exchange was included in this company, as well as the Johnston system.

September 5, 1901 the Griffith and Long Telephone company sold its phones, lines and exchanges to the Northern Indiana and Southern Michigan Telephone, Telegraph and Cable company and two systems, including a thousand phones and exchanges in every town and village in the county went under one management. The toll stations and phones belonging to the American Bell Telephone company in the county remained

under the management of Mr. Griffith who continues to operate them in connection with his Western Union telegraph lines.

The Mutual Telephone company was organized February 20, 1902, by farmers of the county, with L. N. Smith as president. In June, five lines were run into LaGrange and a central station established. This system is co-operative and is intended to furnish telephone service at a minimum cost. It appears to be in a healthy condition with a large number of subscribers.

According to the Indiana Statistical Report of 1906 the Northern Indiana and Southern Michigan company had 165 miles of line in the county, the People's Mutual of

LaGrange 135, the People's Mutual of Wolcottville 42, about three hundred and fifty miles for the two companies. Besides these the Central Union (Griffith lines) and other companies are credited with about 150 miles of wire in the county and the telegraph companies with two hundred miles in all, about seven hundred miles of wire to talk over, and the wireless system not yet introduced. In 1857 the telegraph was about as little understood as the wireless. There was no means of telegraphic communication with LaGrange county. The telephone - why a man who would suggest the possibility of such a thing would have been called a lunatic, if not a heretic.



Study of an Amish mother and child



Can you identify any of the girls in this Brownie Troop? If so, we'd like you to stop in and give us the names.



Norm's

Floral Shop

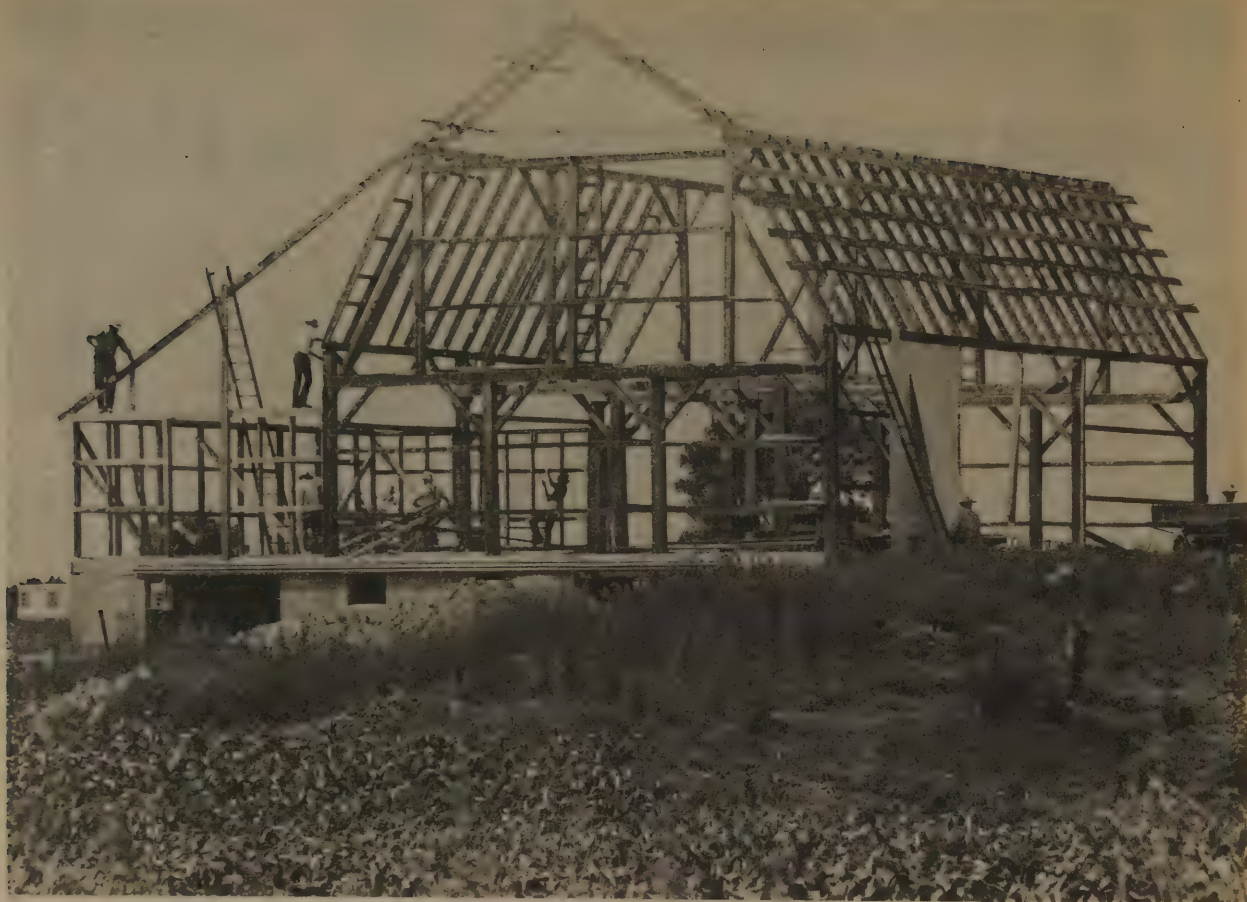
LaGrange, Indiana

Norman W. Duesler

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furniture items in
the same location*



*Since
1856*

1856 - 1919 Owners at various times were a Mr. Saunders; Mr. Jettipo; Mr. Pierce.
1920 - 1943 Owned & operated by Mr. A. L. Hallers until his death.
1943 - 1981 Owned & operated by Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Patterson.
In later years by Mrs. Patterson until her retirement.
1981 - Present Owned & operated by Ted & Peggie Strasser.

Ted & Peggie Strasser's

Patterson's Furniture
Downtown

Wolcottville, Indiana



Two old-timers find time for a chat

The Amish-- county settlers from the earliest times

The Amish, who were among the first settlers in our area, helped to shape the character of our county.

Then, as now, they were looked upon with a certain amount of curiosity. The men didn't wear the deerskin and flannel of the early pioneers. They wore plain, black cloth, as did the women. They seemed to be clannish lot—settling on groups of adjoining farms. And they chose to have their religious services in their homes rather than build church houses.

But few of the early settlers could find fault with their dedication to the land. Where the Amish settled, the fields bloomed under their care.

And few "English" settlers realized in the mid-1800s, when wagon-loads of Amish settlers streamed into western LaGrange County, the price these quiet, unassuming people had to pay to make their trip here.

European beginnings

Most of the first Amish settlers had begun their trip to LaGrange County from Europe where they had suffered for years at the hands of officials of the church-states there. Most had not been allowed to own land, to be in business, to be apprenticed to a trade, and in some areas, had to have the state's permission even to be married.

The Amish religion has its roots in the turmoil of 16th century Europe when Martin Luther, a German monk, challenged the practices of the all-dominating Catholic Church. Luther's break with Catholicism not only created the

Lutheran Church, but brought a rush of new sects—and a rampage of repression by the church and state.

One of those setting out on a new course of religious beliefs was a Dutch Catholic priest named Menno Simon who believed that church and state should be separated, and that man's first allegiance was to God, not the state.

His followers in Holland, Germany and Switzerland soon were branded as heretics and hundreds were put to death by fire, garrotting, beheading, drowning, or other devices of torture of the day.

Many of the doomed were permitted to write final letters to their families and these farewells became part of a book called "Martyr's Mirror," which today remains one of the most important books of the Amish, along with the Bible and the Ausbund, one of the oldest of Protestant hymnals.

Faith grows

Despite the persecutions, the Mennonite faith grew and their numbers increased. And into this turmoil there came a young Swiss Mennonite Bishop named Jacob Amman who talked of his flock as becoming too worldly. Other Mennonite church officials agreed and the Amish Order was established which imposed a strict dress code, as well as new bans on practices Amman thought to be too worldly.

By 1750, the Amish, who had originated in the canton of Berne, Switzerland, in 1693, were expelled, scattered across Central Europe.

The executions had stopped, but the Amish were still treated as outcasts wherever they settled.

Gradually, a few began to look to America, where William Penn had established a colony which promised freedom of religion, and where the Amish could buy and hold land.

Some 300 Amish families migrated to the New Land before the Revolution. After that war, thousands began the harrowing journey across the Atlantic to begin new lives.

The new immigrants, after years of persecution, had little money for passage and either had to work out a bondage for an individual paying their passage, or accept passage money from Amish already established here.

Most settled first in the Berkes County, Pennsylvania, area. A number went further west to the Ohio counties of Mifflin, Holmes and Tuscarawas. It is from the latter two Ohio counties that most of the Indiana Amish came.

Many of the new arrivals in Pennsylvania looked to the West as a place to begin. It is reported that in 1840 four Amishmen set out for what is now Iowa as a new place to settle. On their return home, they came through Elkhart and LaGrange counties and were so pleased with the land and the progress being made by the early settlers they decided on the area as their future home.

Families move in

The following year, four Amish

families moved to the area. Two bought land in Clinton Township, Elkhart County, and two bought land in Newbury Township, LaGrange County, in an area called The Forks.

From that point on, the immigration grew, with most of the families settling in timbered areas because the cleared prairie land was priced too high for their limited capital.

Some moved into an area called "the barrens," thought to be too hilly and fallow for good farming. Soon, however, Amish farmers were bringing in crops and developing highly-productive farms. After all, they had experience in this sort of thing, having been allocated the worst farming areas in Europe.

The Amish immediately set up a church district in the Elkhart and LaGrange County settlements. Isaac Schmucker became the first Amish bishop in 1843. They continued to hold church in the homes—a practice carried over from Europe where home church meetings didn't attract the attention of the church-state officials.

In a short time, two church districts were formed—Elkhart and LaGrange County—and in 1854 a split or schism developed in the Elkhart district. Several ministers spoke out against the "old order" rules of the church and a Mennonite Church was formed.

The Maple Grove Mennonite Congregation near Topeka developed and a church was built.

Despite the split, the Amish have continued to flourish here.



Amish flourish despite stress

There have been hundreds of stories written about the modern-day Amish—"gee whizz" stories about their style of dress; their shunning of electricity; their use of horses, and other aspects of their lifestyle.

Few of these stories, however, answer the question, "Why?"

The Amish religion is a deep and abiding force in their lives. They hold to the "old ways" out of reverence to the martyrs who died in the name of their beliefs.

Many families can trace their lineage back to those days when the church-state executed their ancestors for those beliefs. To abandon that heritage would be unthinkable.

And in our modern-day world, the Amish find spiritual comfort, social enrichment and physical and financial help from their churches.

Family important

The Amish family is the pillar of their existence, something that is being lost in our society. From youth to old age, the Amish man or woman is part of a caring family unit.

The typical Amish farmer works not so much by the clock as he does the seasons—everything in its time.

That is not to say there is no stress on the Amish way in this modern world. While they cling to the old ways, they still must exist and compete in an increasingly technical environment.

The small Amish farm still produces milk by the can, eggs by the carton, corn by the wagon-load and feeder livestock numbered in the dozens. "English" neighbors may have automated milking operations, chicken farms which produce eggs by the truckload, corn by the railcar-load and livestock by the hundreds.

And in the fields, most of the

Amish still plow and plant from fenceline to fenceline, while the tractors of a neighbor may be working from county road to county road.

And even a trip to town is a hazard. The fragile buggies of the Amish are no match for the tons of metal in a fast-moving car or truck whose driver fails to see the horse and buggy in time to avoid a collision.

Simple life

To the uninitiated, it would seem, a grim life. It is, to be sure, a simple life, one with simple pleasures. Their farms, in many cases, are showplaces of well-kept outbuildings and homes; weedless gardens which are the envy of many of us who don't have the time, somehow, to work in the soil a little bit, and yards brimming with beautiful floral borders.

And, although they are reluctant to admit it, there are problems with some of their young people—just as there are with their "English" counterparts. Before joining the church, the young Amish lad or lass is given pretty much free reign in his or her ventures into the world outside the church.

Increasingly, the question is asked, "Can the Amish continue to survive, given the pressures of the modern-day world?"

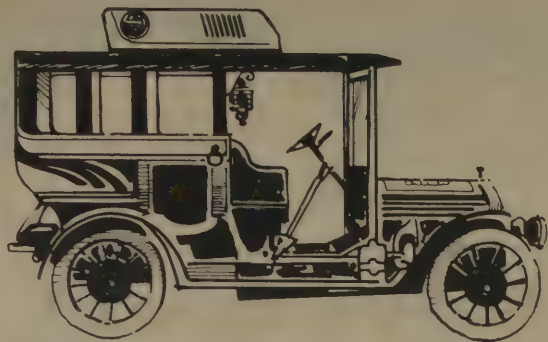
Well, in LaGrange County, the Amish now make up about one-fourth of the population. The young people stay home and farm while their "English" counterparts move out to find jobs in the more metropolitan areas.

It is reported that there are now 112 Amish settlements in the world, ranging from Paraguay to Canada. Some also have moved to Australia to seek a new beginning.

Barring a catastrophic event which will effect all of our lives, the Amish will survive.



Auction draws intent looks



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expanded our residential water heating heat pump market.

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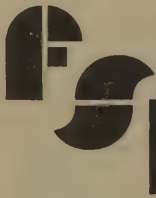


Knowing eyes appraise draft horse



Late summer shines on an Amish farm

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December 31, 1915

\$53,131

December 31, 1920

\$227,449

December 31, 1925

\$272,167

December 31, 1930

\$193,712

December 31, 1935

\$631,846

December 31, 1940

\$1,243,294

December 31, 1945

\$4,663,484

December 31, 1950

\$5,418,917

December 31, 1955

\$8,057,453

December 31, 1960

\$10,391,067

December 31, 1965

\$14,795,274

December 31, 1970

\$23,048,663

December 31, 1975

\$36,242,409

December 31, 1980

\$60,371,819

June 30, 1982

\$70,406,036

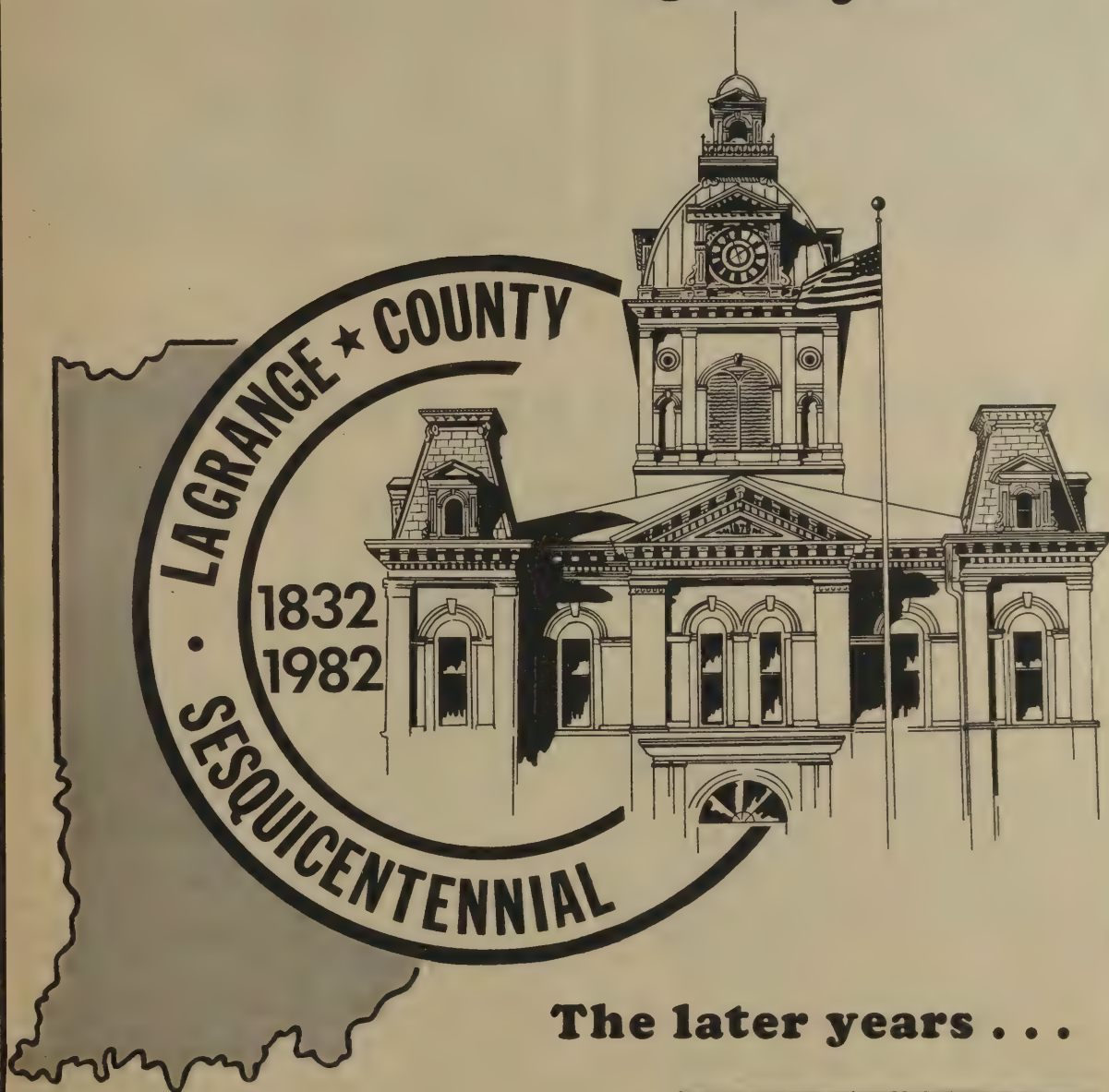
Current Average

\$71,500,000

7 Score and 10

LaGrange County's

150th year

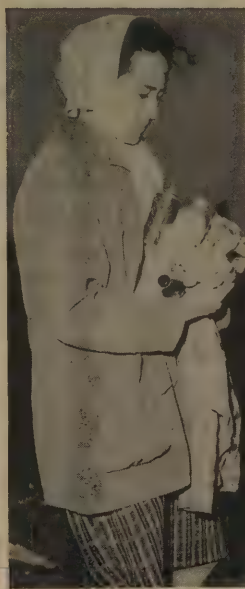


The later years . . .

Fall-1982

Compiled by
LaGrange Publishing Co., Inc.
LaGrange Standard-LaGrange News
The Countian

County's worst disaster



Palm Sunday tornado scenes

County's later years are punctuated with wars

We begin the final edition of this series with the 1940s, the years of World War II.

Suddenly war became a part of our everyday lives. Gasoline, tires, foodstuffs, meat, sugar, heating oil all were rationed. After years of depression, defense work jobs became plentiful, but the necessities became scarce.

During these years there was a good deal of the Standard's news space devoted to "News from our Servicemen," including pictures of young, smiling men in ill-fitting uniforms, under which were unit numbers and APO designations and requests for mail from home.

And there was a certain irony in the fact that many, if not most, of our early settlers came here to escape the constant upheavals and conflicts among European countries. Now, great-great-grandsons were being called back to those countries to fight.

From 1941 through most of 1945, most of our county activities centered on the war effort—scrap drives, war bond drives, packages for our servicemen, victory gardens, civil defense drills and even a blackout or two.

When the war finally ended, we found ourselves with a peace that really wasn't a peace. Russia, our so-called ally in the fighting, began imposing its brand of totalitarianism on nations around the world. Our fight for democracy turned into a Cold War to oppose Russia's peculiar brand of communism.

That kind of turmoil seemed an awfully long way from the farms and communities of LaGrange County. After years of economic stagnation, there was a lot of catching up to do and new homes and businesses were being built at a brisk rate.

The 1950s brought us the atomic age, the space race, television, the Salk vaccine and the end of polio, powerful streamlined cars and dramatic, new farm machinery. The decade also brought us news of civil rights upheavals, the beatnik generation, the Korean "conflict" and the first U.S. interventions in a civil war in Vietnam.

Locally, the story of the '60s was the Palm Sunday tornado, a pair of

deadly twisters which roared through the county on a muggy April afternoon, killing 23 residents and injuring hundreds more; leaving many homeless, and wreaking millions of dollars in damage. While we had experienced tornados skipping across the county before, none had the deadly force and intensity of the Palm Sunday storms.

The decade also brought a growing involvement in the Vietnam War and a growing protest movement among our young people. And, in a time that had suddenly seemed to go mad, we read of the assassinations of our President; the spiritual leader of the civil rights movement, and of a presidential candidate whose promise was to bring a measure of sanity into a chaotic world.

In the '70s, we had the Watergate scandal and the soul-wrenching spectacle of a president publicly resigning from office.

We closed out the decade with American hostages being held in Iran—another fanatical act.

The '80s have begun with an economic struggle of major proportions for the U.S.—a recession that has left millions jobless, interest rates which have dampened progress, and inflation which has eaten into our buying power.

It seems even the weather has turned against us here in LaGrange County in the latter years. Like clockwork, we've experienced a series of mid-winter blizzards which have literally stopped us in our tracks. And we've had a series of growing season reverses which have added to the economic woes of our farmers.

And more tornados, yes.

We began this series with the descriptions of the struggles of our pioneers in staking out a life for themselves in LaGrange County. Back then, the early settler's biggest concern was putting together a big enough larder—through farming and hunting—to live somewhat comfortably.

We still have the same goals here in LaGrange County—to live comfortably. But world events keep crowding in on us. Our living comfortably now depends a great deal on world events, things over which we have no control.

Still, we're pretty lucky. We live in a county which pretty much keeps its own pace. We live in an area of unpolluted skies, beautiful country scenes, sparkling lakes, and relative freedom from much of the ugliness that present day civilization has wrought.



Looking Back Through The Years

LaGrange has a blackout. All traffic halted.

May rains bring flooding throughout the state. LaGrange boy, Frederick Reno, is drowned in the floodwaters of Fly Creek. County scrap drive brings in between 75 and 100 tons of metal.

Housewives register for extra sugar for canning.

An Army airplane crashes in a field near Ontario and the pilot is killed.

Town residents band together to help farmers in the county with their harvest.

War Mothers serve 153 servicemen and women passing through LaGrange in a two week period.

1941

Purity Market to open at LaGrange. Fred Almond, proprietor.

County sheep raisers urge dog tax collection to cover sheep losses.

Thirty-six young men from the county leave for service training camps.

Defense stamps and bonds go on sale in the county.

An early-May tornado sweeps through Topeka, the southern lake townships leaving wrecked buildings, uprooted trees.

Petitions are circulated for a county hospital.

An aluminum drive gets underway for national defense. More than a ton collected.

Thousands of blackbirds short electric lines near Ontario plant.

County is stunned by the news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. We are at war with Japan, Germany and Italy.

Word is received that U.S. 20 may be closed to all traffic except trucks carrying artillery shells.

1942

Sheriff Glen Eash asks that all residents of enemy nations turn over to him all arms, cameras and short wave radios in their possession. One alien responds by turning in a gun.

Severe restrictions are placed on the purchase of tires.

Daylight Savings Time in the country.

Twenty-to 45 age group is ordered to register for the draft.

LaGrange County Women begin making garments for foreign war relief.

The sale of cars is restricted.

Dallas Lake area hit by tornado.

All men to the age of 65 are required to register.

Sugar rationing books are issued after registration at local schools.

Stroh Cement Plant is dismantled.

Howe is hit by a June Storm. Many trees destroyed.

A 35-mile-an-hour speed limit is imposed in the nation and speeding convictions are reported to tire rationing boards.

Shortage of teachers grows serious in the county.

Commissioners vote to turn over two World War I cannons from the courthouse lawn to the scrap drive.

Buildings damaged at Emma in September tornado.

The Wolcottville School is destroyed in a blast and fire on November 12.

Coffee is rationed.

U.S. scores major victory against the Japanese in the Battle of Midway.

U.S. Britain, invade North Africa.

1943

Brighton School collects 32 tons of scrap. Oil and coal heaters are now subject to rationing.

A January snow closes county schools.

Young county women are urged to consider nursing careers to help the war effort.

Civilian Defense classes start.

Call goes out to save used cooking fats and drippings for explosives. Also needed - tin cans, silk and nylon hose, brass and copper.

County asked to help finance the construction of a new battleship to replace the U.S.S. Vincennes, sunk by the Japanese.

Scott School is closed because of a rising number of scarlet fever cases.

President Roosevelt signs the pay-as-you-go income tax bill.

U.S. troops invade Italy.

1944

Married men are being called up by the local draft board.

Every Indiana family is asked to grow a Victory garden.

War Mothers serve 1,600 servicemen and women passing through on trains in 1943.

Blood drives are started throughout the Nation. LaGrange County participates heavily.

Wolcottville business district threatened by a gas station fire.

Shipshewana, which won the sectional tourney at Kendallville, is nosed out by Warsaw at the Fort Wayne Regional.

Ice storm puts hundreds of phones out of commission in the county. Six weeks needed to repair damage.

The Limberlost Camp is closed because of a lack of faculty and food.

Local War Mothers serve 3,231 meals at the LaGrange Depot Canteen.

On June 8, the invasion of Europe begins. County residents are grim as they hear

(Continued on page 4)

MILLER'S MERRY MANOR



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Looking Back Through The Years

(continued from page 3)

reports of some 4,000 ships and 11,000 airplanes are taking part.

Four barns are struck by lightning and destroyed in an August storm. All burned.

A new transport ship, the U.S.S. LaGrange, is christened in California.

Residents asked to gather milkweed floss, to be used in life preservers. A county boy and girl gathered 2,000 five pound bags.

All men over 38 years are placed in the inactive class by selective service.

Republicans win the county and state, but Roosevelt carries the presidency for a fourth term. Some 200 soldiers from the county vote by special absentee ballots.

Fire destroys a department store in Stroh. The Spreuer and Woodworth Plant in LaGrange is working two 10 hour shifts a day making bomb components.

Rationing hits butter, meats and canned goods.

Fifteen service men are served Christmas dinner here by War Mothers.

1945

Snow and cold closes schools.

Lights for outdoor signs and displays are ordered turned off to save coal and electricity.

As the allies march across Europe word is received that war prisoners from the county may soon be released.

On April 12, the death of President Roosevelt is announced to a stunned public. Vice-President Harry S. Truman is sworn in as President.

After repeated hints through the radio and press bulletins that Germany has collapsed, official word of Germany's surrender is received May 7, touching off a celebration in the county. Three days later, V-E Day is observed in LaGrange Churches. Businesses close to celebrate the victory.

County residents gather some 5 tons of used clothing to be sent to the stricken people of Europe.

On August 9, word is received of the surrender of Japan, touching off the ringing of bells - and for many county residents prayers of thanksgiving that the fighting has stopped.

Gasoline and canned goods are released from rationing, butter and all other foods, except sugar and meat, come off the rationing list.

The Mennonite and Amish churches send a carload of flour to the impoverished people of Europe.

1946

A Golden Eagle is shot in the county. Bird is mounted for public display.

Richard and Daniel Scott, brothers from LaGrange County, were reunited in Japan after being apart for some two years. They were stationed within four miles of each other without knowing it.

Several cases of scarlet fever are reported.

A building boom develops in the county despite a shortage of material and labor.

A mid-May freeze hits the apple and peach crops. Temperature dips to the 20s.

Academic Building at Howe School is lost by fire. Plans announced to replace it as soon as possible.

Cement block factory started in LaGrange by Ray Culp and Arthur Gerren.

Bernard Combs purchases the A & P Store. The suspension of price controls has little effect in the county. Sugar and meat continue to be rationed.

A November coal miner's strike brings electricity cut in the area.

Every boy in Scott High School is on the basketball team - all 11 boys in the top four grades.

1947

Kroger announces the opening of a supermarket in LaGrange on March 1.

A minimum pay of \$2,400 is asked for teachers.

Legislation is introduced in the General Assembly to split the LaGrange and Steuben Circuit Court into one court in each county. Red Cross plans aquatic school at Limberlost Camp.

Young Mongo man arrested for molesting bee hives in the Mongo area.

An airport is established just east of Mongo for local enthusiasts.

Cub Scouts are formed in LaGrange. Sugar rationing comes off the rationing list.

Thirteen acres at the end of West Michigan Street, LaGrange, chosen as hospital site.

An earthquake, one of the most severe in the area, is felt.

The remains of 34 war dead to be brought back to LaGrange County.

Shipshewana has a new sales barn.

1948

LaGrange County has 19 centennial farms to date.

REMC system now has 1,270 patrons on its lines in the county.

W.R. Thomas store opens in LaGrange.

An oil tanker truck explodes in LaGrange, destroying the Kennedy Oil Company tanks and a nearby house.

Tests show rabies rampant in county, dogs are ordered confined.

(continued on page 5)



The bank in 1873

The deep imprint of the character and policies
of founders John B. Howe and Samuel P. Williams is as
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We were a good place to bank in 1853...
and are just as good today

Now celebrating one hundred twenty-nine years
of reputable service to the people of LaGrange County

"The Friendly Bank"

State Bank of Lima

Howe, Indiana



Member
F.D.I.C.

Member
Federal Reserve System



Looking Back Through The Years

(continued from page 4)

New draft measure, ordered by President Truman, provides for drafting of men 19 through 25 for a period of 21 months.

Donald H. Hunter appointed LaGrange Circuit Judge by Governor Gates.

Norm's Floral Shop opens in LaGrange. Truman scores a surprise election victory. Democrats score victories in state and national races.

Topeka Elevator fire causes about \$35,000 in damages.

1949

Town of LaGrange employs a full-time police officer.

A monument, honoring World War II veterans, is placed on the courthouse lawn.

Grants are approved for a new county hospital. Contractors expect to break ground by March 15.

Howe Cadets win county and sectional tournaments.

New School building is started at Wolcottville.

Forks Mennonite Church destroyed by fire.

LaGrange Mosonic Lodge celebrates 100th birthday.

The Kehr Iron Works announces it will move from Topeka to LaGrange.

First polio death of the year is reported. Funeral limited to adults only.

Four schools in the county offer a new course, driver's training.

Annual "Sauerkraut making" held at Valentine. Twelve gallons processed to be used for a community supper on November 6.

Coal shortage, caused by coal strike, hits county.

New Plato Mennonite Church is dedicated.

The infamous "Tokyo Rose," who broadcast propaganda for the Japanese during World War II, is tried and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

1950

The beginning of a new decade and America is at war again. President Truman orders the Air Force and Navy to Korea to stem the invasion of North Korean troops into the south. The Army is involved in ground fighting there.

New Lambright Hatchery has grand opening.

A February ice and snow storm causes widespread damage.

Coal crisis puts courthouse on short hours; causes LaGrange school to shut down for a week.

LaGrange County Civil Defense is formed. Selective service Office is opened five days a week, and will begin calling young men from the county.

The dedication of a new county hospital draws a crowd estimated at 4,000.

Five cases of polio reported in the county. County residents join in reporting a U.F.O flyover in late October. Most reported hearing a loud boom and one or more white objects in the sky.

November brings worst snowstorm in 23 years to the area. All movement is stopped. An estimated 500 truckloads of snow are hauled out of the LaGrange business district. Bad weather continues to the end of the year.

1951

A wave of breakins strikes county with schools, elevators and businesses the targets of the thieves.

Twenty-two youths and their parents appear in juvenile court to answer charges of a series of breakins in Topeka, Millersburg, Elkhart and Goshen.

Richard and James Eash enter Golden Glove regional boxing tournament. James Eash wins in his weight class. Dick Eash also wins Fort Wayne bout, goes on to Chicago.

Howard Troyer, author of "Salt and Savor," a novel centered in the county, visits his hometown.

The Garlets General Store in Mongo is sold to Kenneth Myers.

Library board considering purchase of a "Bookmobile."

Amish leaders ask for their own parochial schools in the state.

An early November cold snap drops temperatures to 8 or 10 above zero.

Indiana 3 will be rebuilt from Kendallville to South Milford.

County residents among those stunned at President Truman's firing of General McArthur.

1952

The power plant at the Nasby Dam is shut down by NIPSCO.

Anthrax hits cattle in the county. State Livestock Sanitary Board veterinarian is assigned to county to help farmers battle the disease.

State says it will build a trout hatchery in northern Indiana.

An Amish family donates a complete set of surgical instruments to the new hospital. Wish to remain anonymous.

Mike Brady opens new stockyards in LaGrange.

May storm knocks out 300 telephones in the area.

Polio reaching epidemic proportions in the county. Thirty-nine cases reported in September and one 4-year old from Shipshewana succumbs to the disease. Two week quarantines are being set on homes where a member has the disease.

County polio rate is highest in the state and new cases continue to be reported.

Eisenhower is elected President as GOP sweeps county and state posts.

(continued on page 6)

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Looking Back Through The Years

1955

Brighton wins county basketball tournament for a third time.

Cold snap plunges temperatures to minus 10 degrees.

Drillers strike oil near Woodruff.

Glenn Eash and son, James, move their grocery to a new building at the south edge of LaGrange.

Plans are made to inoculate county school pupils with the new Salk vaccine against polio.

School consolidation plans are discussed. Newbury and Van Buren Townships talk of a high school, plus 7th and 8th grades at Shipshewana, and the first six grades at Scott. Lima, Greenfield, Springfield and Bloomfield officials also talking of a consolidation.

A mid-May frost hits, damaging fruit trees and gardens.

J.O. Mory and son builds a new store in South Milford.

Amish leaders ask that their people be exempted from Social Security.

A July hail storm damages crops in the Topeka area.

Wolfe Grain's central structure collapses under weight of new wheat.

A band festival will be a new feature of the 50th annual Corn School.

Robert M. Waddell Sr., the only living member of the founders of the Corn School will crown this year's queen.

State presses for action on a LaGrange sewer plant.

A dry early winter. Many grass fires are started along the GR and I by sparks from locomotives.

County Hospital reports 481 babies were born there in 1955.

1956

Skywatchers called for in the county. Cold War events create fear of a bomber strike by Russia. The call for watchers says "Join now and sleep safely tonight."

State planning the creation of a hunting and fishing area along the Pigeon River.

A wolf is tracked down and shot near Fish Lake.

A March cloudburst damages roads, floods basements and damages Mongo power dam.

Water fluoridation is approved in LaGrange.

A March 29 ice storm hits utility lines.

A tornado sweeps through the Topeka area, severely damaging homes and barns-building materials were found as much as eight miles from the wind center.

A four-inch rain hits county in early May. New Carney Funeral Home on South Detroit Street.

Elm trees are dying- the victim of Dutch Elm Disease.

Lima Evangelical Church celebrates centennial.

A natural gas pipeline is routed through the county and housing is sought for the workers and their families.

An Indian burial ground is found by a road crew working on the northeast side of Oliver Lake. An Indian chief was buried vertically with the graves of other tribe members around him in a circle.

Commissioners authorize the sale of the county farm and infirmary.

1957

A 1957 shopping list: Ground beef, 3 pounds for \$1; 25 pound bag of flour \$1.59. Men's shoes, \$2.69 to \$4.99. Ladies' dresses, \$3.99 to \$9.99.

A young singer who has been causing much controversy around the country is to appear in a movie shown here. Elvis Presley is the star of "Love Me Tender."

No fires in the LaGrange area for 83 days - an all time record.

A federal grant is approved for the construction of a sewer plant in LaGrange. Local share of the cost will be through a bond issue.

Mastadon bones are found in the county. Members of the Chicago Fields Museum offer to excavate and take.. them to the museum.

Radar is put in several State Police cars in the area.

Another tornado hits - this one in the Cedar Lake and Brighton areas. Buildings, trees, utility lines are damaged. Crops hit, too.

A new golf course is developed near Cedar Lake.

A national auto parts supplier, Sealed Power, begins construction of a plant in LaGrange, expects to employ 80 to 90 persons locally.

The polio organization in LaGrange County is cited for 17 years of service. Mrs. Fred Deal LaGrange, was active during the entire 17 years.

The Fegley blacksmith shop at Poplar and Factory Streets, thought to be 100 years old, is torn down.

Bank Cashier Maurice Kent is fatally wounded by one Richard Klink whose check was refused by Kent. Klink claims to be a "high priest" of a cult he joined in the West and tells authorities he performed a service by teaching bankers a lesson. Klink is tried for murder and sent to the Westville Institution for the criminally insane.

Commissioners approve the numbering and posting of county roads.

The new Milford School is opened.

Flu epidemic closes some schools in the county.

The Miller Grocery, Topeka, is badly damaged in a fire.

Local residents report seeing the Russian satellite, Sputnik II, in the evening sky.

An open meeting is called to discuss zoning in the county.

1958

State acquires more than 2,000 acres to be developed as the Pigeon River Game Preserve.

The old LaGrange Baptist Church on U.S. 20 is torn down.

The Howe Cadets are county, sectional basketball tourney winners.

A Lions Club is chartered in LaGrange.

Home Grain Company observes its 50th anniversary.

New LaGrange sewer plant goes into operation.

Kindergarten classes, sponsored by Delta Theta Tau, are held in LaGrange.

A County school study committee looks into consolidation.

Dr. A. A. Wade, Howe physician for 50 years, is honored.

LaGrange area payroll is now more than \$7 million annually.

New postal rates - letters from 3 cents to 4 cents, air mail now 7 cents.

After reporting five fatalities in all of 1957, we have five fatalities in one August week.

A radar tower is to be erected near LaGrange by the U. S. Civil Aeronautics Commission.

DeWayne and Delmer Pletcher, La-

(continued on page 7)

Glendon Sears, soil conservationist, starts work in the LaGrange County District.

Harry Curtis farm is selected as trout hatchery site.

Price controls, established during the Korean conflict, are lifted.

A \$200,000 addition is planned for the Topeka School.

LaGrange County has Indiana's oldest set of twins - Mrs. Orpha Weir and Orpheus Connelly, 85 years old.

Purdue University takes a 10 year lease on Wainwright's Lumberlost Camp.

Indiana Toll-Road planned. Northern route through LaGrange County is favored.

New car? - Buick Special priced at \$2,232.88

Toll Road route being disputed, pressures being applied for other routes, but state's final decision puts the road through northern Indiana.

The Korean armistice is signed after months of negotiations. Prisoners of War reach home.

State establishes 65 mph speed limit.

An interchange at Howe is planned for the new Toll Road.

Commissioners approve a buggy license tax in the county.

Milford Township planning a new elementary school near the center of the township.

County 4-H Fair is separated from Corn School. Corn School moved back to October as fall festival and homecoming event. A 30 acre tract at northeast edge of LaGrange is purchased for 4-H Fairgrounds.

Law suits are filed to re-route Toll Road south of here.

State Bank of Lima observes 100th Anniversary.

1954

Polio research brings hope for a new vaccine for the prevention of the dread disease.

A burglary spree in Topeka in which Seagly's, the elevator, lumber yard and a garage are entered. A short time later three men are arrested and admit the crimes.

Three brothers- Keith, Maurice and Steward Davis - coach their high school teams to county tourney victories. Maurice at Fremont; Keith at Howe Military, and Steward at Wakarusa in Elkhart County.

Parents, Mr. and Mrs. Niles Davis of Shipshewana travel throughout the area following their sons' teams.

February snow storm brings traffic to a halt.

Law enforcement officials ask Amish to place reflective tape on their buggies in an effort to reduce night accidents.

Pennsylvania Railroad files petition to stop passenger service to Fort Wayne, but retain freight hauling. Area residents protest.

Wolfe Grain Elevator at Shipshewana hit by disastrous fire. Two hundred volunteers help clean up the debris.

Ex-heavyweight champion Joe Louis visits LaGrange

Ontario observes centennial of its historic church.

County roads now have stop signs.

One Amishman chooses jail rather than pay buggy tax.



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Looking Back Through The Years

(continued from page 6)

Grange County, are cited, as one of the most successful harness racing teams in the nation.

A train wreck on Ind. 5 west of Topeka leaves 23 cars and two locomotives derailed. Train struck a truck crossing the tracks. The rail line later filed action against the trucker and his firm.

The big one that didn't get away - a 40 inch, 16 pound pike was caught at Otter Lake.

Republicans sweep county elections. Democrats take state offices.

Machine-Rite Products, Inc., announces it will build a plant in the LaGrange area.

Federal officers arrest a Brighton-area resident for operating a still.

1959

LaGrange Postmaster Harry Groat retires after 24 years of service.

LaGrange Town Board approves zoning in the community.

Heavy snow, topped off with freezing rain, paralyzes county.

The Rogers Orphans Home is closed after 91 years in existence.

Zaner LeMaster resigns as Superintendent of LaGrange Schools. Dean B. Smith named his successor.

Star Tank and Boat Company builds a plant at Topeka.

Dees Newstand opens.

Paul Riddick retires as editor of the Standard.

Wolcottville Boat Company hit by a \$50,000 fire.

Five townships-Springfield and Milford in LaGrange County, and Millgrove, Jackson and Salem in Steuben County - file notice of their consolidation, to be called the Prairie Heights Community School Corporation.

A request is made of the state for a U.S. 20 truck bypass. It is refused, but state does approve the widening of Ind. 9 from the Toll Road interchange to LaGrange.

A six-car derailment is reported at Wolcottville.

Alaska and Hawaii are admitted to the U. S. Alaska as the 49th state January 3, and Hawaii as the 50th state August 21.

1960

Jack W. Wainwright, 70, dies at his farm south of LaGrange of a heart attack. He was a state representative at the time of his death and was known nationally for his work with music students. He founded the Limberlost Summer Band Camp in 1927 and it continued to operate until 1943.

The 88 - year old county jail, one of the county's showplaces when it was built, is destroyed by fire. County prisoners are housed at the Steuben County Jail, while plans for a new jail get underway.

An air strip at Shipshewana is approved by state authorities.

The county school committee votes for a single high school consolidation. The Prairie Heights group files a protest. Local court rules Prairie Heights is not a legal corporation. State also rules that Prairie Heights action was illegal.

Another new factory for LaGrange. Motor Wheel announces it will build a plant to hire between 125 and 150 employees.

A new post office is approved at Shipshewana.

Oil men lease 20,000 acres in the county in hopes of finding oil.

Pigeon River bridge on old Ind. 9 collapses when it is hit by a car. Seven persons hurt in the accident.

Republicans are easy victors locally, but Senator John F. Kennedy wins the presidency over Vice-President Richard Nixon.

Two youths are charged with wrecking a 140 car freight train on the GR and I at the south edge of Howe. The train went through an open switch and crashed into a string of parked box cars. Four diesel engines and 10 cars are derailed, 10 more damaged.

Construction of a new elementary school (Parkside) begins.

1961

A national agency reports there are 253 businesses in the county.

Plans begin for a LaGrange Country Club. Stock totalling \$23,000 is sold in one week.

A talk of consolidation of our schools grows more serious, a proposal is made to preserve some of the county's one-room schools as historical buildings.

Walter Schrock acquires the Shipshewana Auction facilities.

An April 20 blizzard leaves 14 inches of snow and seven foot drifts in the county.

A May tornado injures five, damages 50 homes in the Witmer Lake residential area.

The state commission approves the Lakeland School District, to include Bloomfield, Lima, Greenfield and part of Clay Township.

A late May frost causes heavy fruit damage in the county.

Train derails at South Milford overpass. No injuries reported.

Some 3,000 attend open house of new Shipshewana State Bank.

A new doctor at Howe - M. Reed Taylor.

A Westview School plan is offered to the state which includes western townships of the county.

Campbell Soup Company purchases land east of Brighton for a mushroom-growing facility.

U.S. joins the man in space race with Commander Alan Shepard Jr. being rocketed into space for a sub-orbital flight.

1962

A youth center is established in the Schott Building in LaGrange.

A 90 acre site is purchased at the southeast edge of LaGrange for the Lakeland High School.

Donald Helmkamp opens a Dodge dealership in LaGrange.

New jail is completed.

Some 10,000 rainbow and brown trout are released in county streams.

Some 420 youngsters enroll for the Cedar Lake Swim School.

Westview School petition is approved by the state and the state also approves the Prairie Heights school plan.

A \$300,000 addition is planned at Sealed Power. Motor Wheel also expands.

Lt. Col. John Glenn becomes the first American to orbit the earth in the Mercury space capsule.

U.S. Military advisors are in Vietnam.

1963

Brice Diehl named Prairie Height's first superintendent.

Election winners Jack P. Dunten and Jack T. Bowen sworn in as Circuit Court Judge and Sheriff, respectively.

Howard Petersen opens law office here. Ohio Table Pad begins operations here.

Flu epidemic hits, visitors barred at nursing homes and the hospital here.

Lakeland High School to cost \$1,850,000. Contracts let.

Millers Department Store opens. Mongo Tavern owner Paul Frederick killed in a blaze of bullets. A Mongo man held. Grand jury returns murder verdict against Phillip Weaver, 34.

Post offices begin ZIP code system.

A late-June frost damages corn and soybean crops in the county.

Weaver, convicted of Mongo shooting, given life sentence.

Some 800 taxpayers reject Prairie Heights tax levy.

Two companies, Fan Coach and Ohio Table Pad buy sites in LaGrange's industrial park.

Robert M. (Mort) Waddell, for 30 years editor of the Standard, and for 10 years LaGrange Postmaster, dies.

Aunt Jemima visits Corn School.

County is stunned by news of the assassination of President Kennedy. More than 300 persons gather at the First United Methodist Church for a memorial service.

Sales tax is inaugurated in state.

Frye and Earnhart open Ford Mercury agency in LaGrange.

State authorities say Amish buggies must have flashing amber lights for night travel. By year's end there are 15,000 troops in Vietnam.

1964

A January wind topples Lakeland gym walls. The partially-constructed gym walls also were done in by wind two months earlier.

A new factory at Shipshewana will manufacture mobile homes according to managers Harold Gerring and Paul Carne. Some 65 local persons will be employed.

M.E. Hanselman named principal of the new Lakeland School. Richard E. Butt named basketball coach.

Golfball-like dome built over LaGrange radar installation.

The 132-year old Mongo "Olde Store" is restored.

Kehr Iron Works expands its plant in LaGrange.

One hundred acres of marshland burns near Mongo. Mongo, Orland and Stroh firemen battle the fire for four days.

President Johnson wins sweeping victory over Barry Goldwater. Republicans win all county offices. Phil Bir, LaGrange, a Democrat candidate for state senator, loses by 40 votes, asked for a recount. It was denied.

Westview School site is purchased.

Some 1,200 hunters kill 80 deer on opening day of the season.

Barney's Market, LaGrange, fills 280 Christmas baskets for Motor Wheel employees-some 4 tons of food.

1965

Local Shriners treat 179 county pupils to a day at the circus in Fort Wayne.

Early LaGrange businessman Willard Pyley dies.

Farmers State Bank buys old Rurick Hotel to tear it down for a parking lot.

Petitions asking Westview and Lakeland School Corporation to merge are presented to school boards. The plan is rejected.

Lakeland Lakers win their first sectional basketball tourney but fall to Fort Wayne North in the regional.

A 19 - inch, late March snowfall stops county in its tracks.

(continued on page 8)

Since 1965

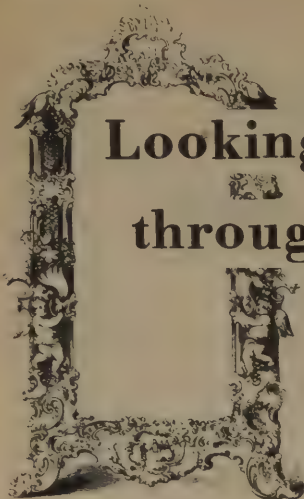


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LaGrange



Looking back through the years

(continued from page 7)

Brown Drug Store moves from its location of 70 years into the abandoned Kroger Store in LaGrange.

The most devastating storm in LaGrange County history-The Palm Sunday Tornado-claims 23 lives as twin funnel clouds sweep through the county. Most of the homes and outbuildings with a two mile radius of Ind. 5 and U.S. 20 were destroyed; the Ontario and Scott areas also received severe damage as did the northeastern portion of the county.

The tornadoes were part of a series of twisters which swept through the state on that unseasonably warm April day.

A temporary morgue was set up in the LaGrange Youth Center for the victims. Injured residents filled the local hospital to overflowing.

Disaster teams from around the country were soon at work clearing the debris and beginning the rebuilding of homes and barns. An estimated \$200,000 damage was done to farmland in the county.

The Red Cross announced it had fed some 12,000 tornado victims and volunteer workers. One man, Paul Jones, 21, Shipshewana, was killed while clearing the debris from the storm.

Farmers miles from the storm centers had to clear fields of debris before they could complete their spring plowing.

Business changes in LaGrange-Mr. and Mrs. Earl Gould purchase Millers Department Store; Willard, Frank and Rollin Carney purchased the L.O. Gallup Paint Store, and Harold Ice bought the Homer Cain Hauling Service.

Water and sewage system plans discussed by the Shipshewana Town Board.

Howe Lions build a shelter house in the town square.

The William Darrow farm to be the site of a new airfield. The Oliver Lake Air Park nears completion.

Frurips announce the construction of a new funeral home.

Machine-Rite becomes a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Excel Corporation of Elkhart.

William H. Hostetler sells the LaGrange Chevrolet agency to Frazier Nelson of Detroit.

A retarded children's organization is being organized in the county.

Plans for a new Westview Junior-Senior High School are approved by the state.

James A. Wire, conservation officer in LaGrange County, named "National Conservationist of the Year."

U.S. forces in South Vietnam reach 184,500 by year's end.

1966

Prairie Heights' new gym to see its first action as Middlebury comes to play.

The new Prairie Heights Junior-Senior High School is dedicated in a February 13 ceremony.

Surplus commodities from the Department of Agriculture will be distributed to the county's needy by the township trustees.

Lakeland wrestlers win sectional title.

Flasher light installed at Ind. 9 and Ind. 120 in Howe.

New siren weather warning siren system installed in LaGrange.

The Fawn Corporation constructs a mobile home industry near Howe.

School of Opportunity begins at the abandoned Clay School.

Twenty-six cars on the GR&I derail near Howe, \$300,000 damage.

James Robbins is named new principal of Lakeland High School.

Multi-Plex, Inc., is established near Howe.

The new Shore Mennonite Church is dedicated. The old facility was destroyed in the Palm Sunday Tornado.

Dr. Kenneth Lehman, Topeka, goes on 60 days volunteer duty in Vietnam.

An early November snowfall closes schools for several days.

A salute to Vietnam servicemen is published in The Standard.

Law officials report nine traffic deaths and two drownings in the county in 1966.

By year's end, 385,000 American troops are stationed in South Vietnam.

1967

Terry's Market closes its doors after 73 years on LaGrange's Detroit Street.

Shriners treat 183 5th graders to circus in Fort Wayne.

Youth center in LaGrange is closed.

February 3 snow closes all schools. Two weeks later another heavy snowfall hits and schools are shut down again.

Henry Rehm resigns as county commissioner and Lynn J. Warner of Howe is appointed in his place.

Philomaths of Howe celebrate 70th anniversary.

Ray Boyle, Lakeland wrestler wins the state championship in the 180-pound class.

Twin Mills resort to open in the spring.

County Historical Society begins work on saving the historic Cochran Tavern north of South Milford.

More than 8,000 license plates are sold at the county branch.

Howard Chrisman is named a new deputy sheriff, replacing Robert Barthold, who resigned.

County receives \$466,383 in motor vehicle tax funds.

Local members of the National Farmers Organization join in a nation-wide milk-dumping effort to raise prices.

A late-April snowfall blankets the county.

Some 450 county residents are listed as volunteer members of the Civil Defense.

A dry spring and early summer puts heavy water demands on community water services.

Twenty-eight men are sent by the county selective service board to Indianapolis for physical exams.

A log cabin situated southeast of Mongo is donated to the historical society and is reconstructed on the 4-H Fairgrounds.

Mrs. Ethel L. Price, Howe, retires as postmistress after 30 years of service.

Michigan-Wisconsin Pipeline under construction in the county.

The new Westview Junior-Senior High School opens for classes.

New post office in Topeka is dedicated.

Claude B. Spreuer, head of Spreuer and Sons, dies.

Some 4,000 attend the 50th anniversary open house of Pyleys Candy.

The Jayceets are organized in LaGrange.

Fifty-one Amish teachers take state-required teaching qualification tests at Topeka.

By years end, 475,000 U.S. troops are in Vietnam.

1968

Russell Velie retires as LaGrange day marshal and street superintendent after 11 years of service.

The Standard-News switches to off-set printing.

Melvin Bricker named chairman of the newly-Organized LaGrange County Plan Commission.

Fire destroys the historic Scott Mill, which had been used as a booster plant by

(continued on page 9)



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Looking Back Through The Years

(continued from page 8)

NIPSCO. A mill had been on the site since 1860.

LaGrange Town Board authorized a new town office and fire station.

Hospital reports 1,780 patients were admitted in 1967.

Commissioners authorize the hiring of professional appraisers to check buildings, and land for new appraisal value rates.

Barn burns at Shipshewana Auction property.

NIPSCO workers strike in LaGrange. An early July deluge causes crop damage in the county.

Deputy Sheriff Chrisman resigns.

Sylvan Mobile Homes factory being constructed near Topeka.

First case of polio in the county in 15 years is reported.

The total assessed valuation of the county is set at \$46 million.

School officials report 5,325 pupils enrolled in the county's three school corporations.

Indiana gets vehicle inspection law and four sites are approved in LaGrange.

Hallmark Homes of Topeka begins production.

Bill and Casey's Landing heavily damaged by fire.

It is the year the U.S.S. Pueblo is captured by the North Koreans and Senator Robert F. Kennedy is assassinated in California.

1969

C.G. Sherck is named LaGrange Town Marshal.

Building permits for \$234,500 in construction are issued in 1968.

Mennonites continue tradition of canning beef for the world's hungry, a project started in 1952.

William F. Connelly named new publisher The Standard and The News.

Robert Kraning retires as Brighton School principal after 48 years as a teacher, 24 of them at Brighton.

Some 50 deer have been killed on county roads in the first two months of the year.

A dry spring and grass fires plague county's firemen.

An Amish youth is killed in a rock-throwing incident. Mervin D. Lehman, 17, was killed when a rock was thrown in his buggy from someone in a passing car. The assailant was never found.

Factory construction booms in Howe area. Academy Mobile Homes, Multi-Plex is expanding, and construction is set for the Riblet Productions, Inc.

Topeka telephone exchange is converted to a dial system, ending 24 years of service by Ada Yoder as a telephone operator.

A building fund drive is started for the School of Opportunity.

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Turner purchase Turners Drug Store in Topeka from Turner's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Turner, who owned the store for 23 years.

E. Earl Shirar is named principal of Prairie Heights High School.

Annual 4-H Fair is a success. Livestock sale nets \$21,940.

Edward A. Wolfe, 79, founder of Wolfe Grain, Inc., dies.

First letter of your last name will now determine when you buy your 1970 car license plates.

County residents watch with the rest of the world when Astronaut Neil A. Armstrong sets foot on the moon.

Years of protest to the Vietnam War

culminate in a massive march on Washington, D.C.—250,000 take part.

1970

LaGrange ended the 1960s with a healthy upsurge in building. New construction starts reached an estimated value of \$1,408,500 in 1969.

Howe gets a new physician—Dr. Richard D. Willard.

LaGrange County Hospital awarded a \$365,000 grant for renovation and a new wing.

Assessed valuation of the county is up by \$12.5 million.

James Robbins, Lakeland principal since 1966 resigns after being denied a leave of absence for doctorate studies.

Westview High School signs Dennis Foster as varsity basketball coach.

Some 50,000 chinook salmon placed in Witmer, Dallas and Messick Lakes as a "put and take" experiment.

County banks contribute \$10,000 towards the expansion of the LaGrange County Hospital.

Joseph A. Clune named new principal at Lakeland High School.

Pearl Shafer, Mongo, pulls a 41-inch, 17 and one-fourth pound pike from the Mongo Mill Pond on a cane pole.

Cedar Lake group asks that the access to the swim school beach be closed.

A circuit court injunction stops a planned "pop" festival at Stone Lake over the Labor Day holiday.

Dr. Philip E. Yunker retires.

Rilla Plyley, 96, founder of Plyleys, dies.

The Combs Grocery at Spring and Detroit is sold after 24 years in business.

The Fan Coach firm is sold to W.R. Grace and Company.

1971

The year's early numbing cold changes to a warm spell, which in turn brings thunderstorms, a cloudburst, violent wind and finally, ice. Basements are flooded and roads are impassable.

Carl Lundberg opens a law practice in LaGrange.

Eleven grass fires are reported in April.

Shipshewana salutes five new businesses—Shipshewana Ceramics, Bueters Sewing Center, Shadow Interiors: Mastercraft and Dick's Barbershop.

Robert L. Pierce, Parkside principal resigns after 36 years of teaching in LaGrange and 46 years as a teacher.

New county landfill opens on CR 300S.

Stroh Branch of the Farmers State Bank is robbed of approximately \$30,000. No suspects in custody.

Neal Ruetz, 39, Denver, Colorado, being held in the LaGrange County Jail on a murder charge, somehow walked out of the jail to freedom. Immediate efforts to find him failed.

Commissioners approve an "assembly ordinance" which would all but ban rock music concerts in the county. It would prohibit the assembly of more than 500 persons for any event lasting more than 12 hours.

James McKibben is named principal of Parkside and LaGrange Elementary schools.

Arrests are made in the Farmers State Bank robbery and in the Stroh Grain arson.

A Ball State University study proposes the construction of a middle school in the Lakeland Corporation.

Verla Christner, Topeka Postmaster, dies unexpectedly.

Browns Drug Store, LaGrange, observes 75th anniversary.

LaGrange County Jail escapee Neal Ruetz is caught in Reno, Nevada, returned to LaGrange.

A local student who traveled with the Sturgis Concert Choir in Europe suggests to the LaGrange Town Board that a resolution be passed naming Gripskerk, The Nether-

lands, a sister city of LaGrange.

Eleven nabbed in a drug raid on two farmhouses in the county.

Plan commission study shows county population shows signs of steady growth.

A Constitutional amendment lowering the voting age to 18 is approved.

1972

A dispatcher hired at the sheriff's department to provide 24-hour protection.

Temperatures drop to 20-below-zero here.

An outbreak of flu fills the LaGrange County Hospital.

Tentative plans outlined for the development of a county park on part of the Rogers Orphans Home land.

Mongo firemen start a drive to construct a new community building.

Lightning strikes Bailey's Motel, north of Howe, and the resulting fire destroys south wing of the facility. No injuries.

Fire destroys Yankee Airways at Howe. Three planes destroyed in a blaze started by an electrical short.

Auburn Federal Savings and Loan opens in LaGrange. Richard R. Conley of Churubusco is branch manager.

Cedar Lake's swim school enrollment largest in history. Nearly 400 sign up for two-week instruction. But cottage owners in the area try to end the school by court petition and by erecting "Keep Out" signs. School goes on anyway.

The late Jack Wainwright's early "movie" films of LaGrange in 1937 and 1938 are restored by the fire department and placed in a vault in the Farmers State Bank.

Commissioners sign a lease on the Delt Church farm to be developed as a recreational area.

Farmers State Bank moves to a new building at Detroit and Wayne, commissioners purchase the old bank building at Detroit and Spring as a courthouse annex.

It is an election year and Richard Nixon wins handily over George McGovern. GOP also sweeps county.

Fall rains hurting farmers.

Willie's Carbide, Topeka, is planning an expansion. Parent company, ExCello, says employment will double.

Citizens Bank and Trust Company seeks charter in LaGrange. Local banks sue to stop the request.

Increasing number of snowmobiles bring complaints from residents about their operations.

It is the year that the Watergate burglaries are revealed.

1973

Flu hits county, causing high rate of absenteeism at schools, businesses.

High School basketball is in full swing and a Westview player, Gary Yoder, is well on his way to setting a new county scoring record.

A March blizzard hits with a fury that stops everything. Power outages across the county and rural families are stranded for days.

The LaGrange County Area Plan Commission approves a county-wide zoning plan.

The LaGrange County Council rejects local option tax.

County hit by mid-May snow.

County residents, like the rest of the nation, wait in line for gasoline as the OPEC nations put the squeeze on the U.S.

Shipshewana firemen move into a new building.

LaGrange Town Board approves a new town park with a shelterhouse, sports facilities and a playground at Steuben and Mountain Streets, site of the former town dump.

The historic Kingsbury House in Howe is opened to the public after extensive remodeling.

The livestock sale at the 4-H Fair brings \$74,947.

An August tornado sweeps through the Cedar Lake area causing widespread

damage but no injuries.

The county welfare department petitions the county to go on the food stamp plan.

The Penn-Central Rail firm cancels all runs on the GR&I. The order is rescinded a day later.

A flurry of UFO sightings are reported by county residents.

Hook's Drugs opens in LaGrange.

December begins with the first "gasless Sunday."

Month ends with another snowstorm, closing schools and businesses.

Thirteen deaths on the county's highways in 1973, one short of all-time high.

The Watergate scandal begins to unravel in televised hearings from Washington.

Vice-President Agnew resigns under a cloud of kickbacks and tax evasion.

1974

Prairie Heights announced plans for a new elementary and middle school complex at the high school grounds. Orland, Flint and Salem schools will be closed.

George Curtis, founder of the Shipshewana Auction, dies.

Energy shortage and the rising cost of fuel hits the recreation vehicle industry in the county. The bigger firms try to ride out the crisis while the smaller outfits are closing their doors.

Temperatures are lowered in homes, schools and businesses to conserve fuel. Schools scramble to find enough fuel to stay open and curtail many after-school activities.

A 55 mile-an-hour speed limit goes into effect on the Nation's roadways.

William Gohl, superintendent of Westview since its founding, announces his retirement.

Penn-Central declares bankruptcy and abandons the GR&I and Pumpkin Vine rail lines in the county.

Food stamps are introduced in LaGrange County.

The Deboe plant, north of Wolcottville, is destroyed by fire.

Another April—another tornado. This one causing millions of dollars of damage and injuring 25 county residents as it plowed through the South Milford and Stroh communities, leveling homes and farm buildings.

Another May—another graduation. Some 305 seniors are graduated from the county's three public high schools.

A county hospital controversy dominates the news in June. The hospital board's decision to fire administrator Phil Bir touches off a furor of charges and counter charges among the board, the medical staff and county officials. Bir's firing is upheld.

Richard L. Wilson is named Westview's new superintendent.

Fan Coach, A Grace operation, closes its doors. But two months later, the firm is repurchased by Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Newcomer, the original owners, and limited production is begun.

A late September freeze adds to the crop losses caused by a dry summer and wet spring. Crop losses are estimated at \$17 million and county officials ask that LaGrange County be declared a disaster area.

A N&W train carrying new autos details near Wolcottville causing an estimated \$1 million loss. Twelve cars left the track and many of the new autos caught fire.

A heavy voting in the November election, and for the first time since the 1930s, Democrats are elected to a number of county offices.

Dean B. Smith announces his retirement as Lakeland Superintendent, a post he had held since the formation of the school corporation.

The LaGrange Country Club is sold to a Winchester businessman who announces plans for several improvements at the facility.

(continued on page 10)



Looking Back Through The Years

(continued from page 9)

With his administration crumbling around him, and impeachment hearings facing him, President Nixon resigns from office. The news is greeted in ho-hum fashion in the county.

1975

Essex International, Inc., purchases two production facilities in the county.

An extortion plot against many Amish residents is broken up with the arrest of a LaGrange man, Arthur Hayner, 42.

Flu hits and the "winter miseries" continue for a month.

The LaGrange Town Board announces the formation of an economic development commission to spur industrial growth in the community.

The LaGrange County Humane Society is formed and begins an assessment of the need for an animal shelter.

James Auter is named Lakeland Superintendent.

An April 2 ice and snow storm glazes roads and brings power blackouts to many areas of the county.

To prepare for the Nation's Bicentennial, LaGrange begins with a courthouse lawn ceremony featuring music, speeches and demonstrations of pioneer skills.

Lakeland Principal Joseph Clune, resigns.

County highway garage plan is revived when money is appropriated for its construction.

Wolfe Community Center in Shipshewana is dedicated.

William Beau Christian is named Lakeland High School principal.

LaGrange County Library plans expansion.

A record \$97,628 is paid to 4-H members at the annual 4-H Fair livestock auction.

An inspection team from the Indiana Department of Public Instruction recommends the construction of a middle school and additional classrooms at Parkside in the Lakeland district. The team also recommends the abandonment of the century-old LaGrange School and the eventual closing of the Brighton and the 100-year-old portion of the Lima School.

Glenn Eash, 71, former commissioner, sheriff and founder of the Purity Market, dies.

Governor Otis R. Bowen speaks at the Corn School's Homecoming Dinner.

The county's free inoculation program is suspended as concern is expressed that families who can afford inoculations at their family physician are getting them free through the program.

For the first time in history a 200-bushel-an-acre corn crop is reported.

Mongo's Olde Store is recognized as a national landmark.

Traffic stops on the GR&L and the Pumpkin Vine.

1976

The county court replaces the justice of peace system in the county and Patrick Purdy, Angola, is named judge of the LaGrange and Steuben County Courts.

A series of winter storms hits the county in late January and early February closing schools for days at a time. High winds, blasting across accumulated snow close roads as fast as they can be opened.

Opposition to the proposed Lakeland Middle School surfaces. The school board is asked to put the issue to a public vote. The board turns down the request.

Bomb threats plague Lakeland High School until four persons, two of them students, are apprehended.

A March tornado hits the county leaving 16 residents injured. Damage estimated at about \$250,000.

The Pumpkin Vine is named as one of the state's abandoned rail lines which will receive federal funds for repair and will remain open from Shipshewana to Goshen for at least a year under a subsidy plan.

Seven Howe cadets are treated for smoke inhalation in a fire at the school's gym. The cadets were helping remove equipment from the burning structure.

The LaGrange County Nutrition Center is opened, but begins with a two-meals-a-week program.

Glenn O. Keasey, 79, Howe, a founder of the Associates Investment Company, and for 24 years author of the "Chucklin Charlie and Aunt Min" column in The Standard and The News, dies.

The county's three public high schools graduate 304 seniors.

The Metro Ambulance Service, which had been meeting emergency medical needs in the county for some two years, goes out of business for financial reasons. The LaGrange County Hospital agrees to take over the service for \$107,850 a year.

A county-wide immunization program is reinstituted for youngsters whose parents cannot afford a physicians services.

The Topeka area is hit by a wind and hail storm. Damage is estimated at \$200,400, not including crop damage.

County's celebration of the Nation's Bicentennial is a three-day festival on the courthouse lawn and a parade.

The state predicts that LaGrange County will double in population—to 41,000—by the year 2000.

The Lakeland School Board will put the middle school issue to a referendum in the school district. The questions—(1.) the construction of a corporate-wide middle school, or (2.) the construction of a school to accommodate the 4th through 8th grades in the LaGrange area only. The referendum is protested by middle school opponents who want a yes or no vote on the middle school.

The LaGrange County Park Board is created.

Prairie Heights teachers and board members—at an impasse on wage talks—ask for a fact-finder.

The Wolcottville Youth Center, "First Place" is forced to close when it is decided it cannot meet the fire codes of the state.

It is another Republican year at the voting booths. On the controversial middle school referendum, both sides claim victory.

The Lakeland board authorizes yet another study of the middle school situation.

An apartment complex at the south edge of LaGrange, to accommodate senior citizens, is proposed.

Prairie Heights negotiators reach an agreement on a wage contract.

Scott Ensley, 12-year-old Prairie Heights 7th grader, is cited by the governor for his efforts in saving 11 persons in a pontoon boat mishap.

U.S. Bicentennial is a spectacular success.

1977

A state board of health ruling on milk cooling hits many Amish farmers. The regulation, which requires raw milk to be cooled to 50 degrees within two hours of milking, would require refrigeration equipment—something not present on small Amish farms. An Amish protest, and the work of Representative Elbert Roe, ease the requirements, which many Amish said would put them out of business.

Prairie Heights Middle School is opened.

Another arctic winter blast closes schools for three days. This storm is followed by a

full-blown blizzard which for five days gave us wind-blown snow and sub-zero temperatures. More than 600 Toll Road motorists were stranded in LaGrange, and 18 persons were reported injured in storm-related accidents.

An assessment of the Blizzard of '77 showed some \$200,000 in storm damages, including livestock losses and damage to snow removal equipment.

Lakeland School Board votes to build a new junior high school and to close the old LaGrange School.

An April warm spell—temperatures reach the 80s.

A little-known religious group, The Way, begins renovation of Kneipp's Spring north of Rome City. Some community concern about the sect's impact on young people in the area.

The historic Sycamore Hall in Topeka is being offered for sale by the Topeka Town Board.

Hubbard Milling, which had acquired the bankrupt Wolfe Grain Company, announces a major expansion program.

Another flap generated by the state board of health. The agency banned the sale of homemade quilts—a specialty of the Amish culture. A compromise was worked out in which the Amish would be allowed to fashion their quilts without licensing requirements.

A lightning bolt triggered a fire which destroyed the Rehkopf firm in Wolcottville.

The GR&L line is closed from LaGrange south to Kendallville, will continue to operate with federal subsidy from LaGrange to Sturgis.

Three young area men arrested in connection with a number of shotgun holdups of Amish farmers while driving buggies or wagons on county roads.

September begins with a tornado scare. Several funnel clouds sighted but none touched down.

LaGrange County listed among the top 14 fastest growing counties in the state in terms of population.

Another winter blast, this one bringing sub-zero temperatures and wind-driven snow. The miserable weather even postponed Santa's visit in Topeka.

The Lakeland basketball team with the one-two-punch of Jeff King and Bill Bender is ranked among the top 20 in the state.

1978

The clubhouse at the LaGrange Country Club is destroyed by fire early on New Year's Day.

County's real estate agents ask that zoning law's three-acre requirement for a homestead be reduced to one and one-half acres.

Special Judge Edward J. Myers, Whitley County, rules against Cedar Lake group seeking to close the Cedar Lake Swim School.

Here we go again—the Blizzard of '78 dumps more than 20 inches of snow on the county, immobilizing us for four days. More than \$2 million in damages is estimated in this winter blow.

George Rinkel, 79, owner and operator of Rinkel's Mill since 1927, died.

A remonstrance is filed against the construction of the Lakeland Middle School. A public hearing is scheduled.

The sectional basketball tournament is postponed because of the energy crunch.

A dispute develops between Coroner Richard Spindler and Sheriff Donald Pilz. Dr. Spindler says Pilz should turn over his duties to the coroner when he is out of the county.

In a heart-breaker, Lakeland failed to win the regional basketball crown. The Lakers fall to North Side of Fort Wayne, 47-44 in the final regional contest.

Harry Groat, 89, former postmaster and editor of The LaGrange News, dies.

LaGrange Town Board approves a Farmer's Market in downtown LaGrange during the summer months.

Coachmen Industries, Middlebury,

acquires the Fan Coach firm in LaGrange.

Fire destroys Wolcottville's Econo-Mart. Damages estimated at at least \$500,000. Dugan Skinner, president of the firm, says he will rebuild.

The LaGrange County Courthouse's centennial is observed in a day-long program.

Representative Elbert Roe is spearheading an effort to keep the Ligonier State Police Post in operation. It is to be moved to Fort Wayne.

Foltz Bakery in LaGrange is gutted by fire.

Prairie Heights teachers go on strike in a wage dispute. The four-day walkout ends with a contract agreement.

Prairie Heights Superintendent Brice Diehl resigns and Principal Robert Slavens is named to replace him.

Edward Ritter, principal at Brighton, is named as principal of the new Lakeland Junior High School, to be opened next fall.

1979

The new year began with a controversy over who is the rightful occupant of the surveyor's office. Jack Madden was elected on the Democrat ticket, but Edwin Houck, former surveyor who lost out in the primary election, charged that Madden was not a legal resident of the county.

More snow and sub-zero weather. Ron Sullins named principal of Prairie Heights High School.

The LaGrange Publishing Company moves to new quarters in the former AT&T Long Lines Building at the south edge of LaGrange.

Members of the Amish community agreed to switch to a borium horseshoe instead of the standard steel shoe to help prevent damage to road surfaces.

A LaGrange County Grand Jury indicted former surveyor Edwin Houck on six counts of theft by deception, alleging he billed the county for rental equipment which was never used.

The new St. Joseph's Catholic Church is dedicated.

Earl Sample, principal at Westview Junior-Senior High, announces his resignation.

The Sturgis-LaGrange segment of the GR&L rail line is ordered closed.

Another gasoline shortage and more lines at the filling stations.

The Shipshewana Auction arena building and holding area were destroyed by fire. Owner Walter Schrock says he will rebuild.

The first freight begins to move on the Pumpkin Vine Line between Shipshewana and Goshen.

Circuit Court Judge Jack P. Dunten announces his retirement. Attorney Howard E. Petersen is appointed to the post by Governor Bowen.

Joseph L. Yoder's Country Store, on Hawatch Road, was leveled by fire. Yoder announces he will rebuild the facility.

Fork's County Line Store in Shipshewana receives two boxcar loads of toilet paper.

Robert J. Sell, a real estate agent in LaGrange for more than 40 years, dies.

As Christmas approached, the weather was anything but Christmasy. Mild temperatures prevailed through most of the month, disappointing the snow lovers but delighting the payers of heating bills.

1980

In a real turn-around, the weatherman treats the county to mild temperatures in January.

The President's announcement of a grain embargo against Russia hits local grain sales.

The Schlemmer Hardware store moves from Detroit Street to a new building at the south edge of LaGrange.

County commissioners call for bids for an animal shelter.

(continued on page 11)



Looking Back Through The Years

(continued from page 10)

One of the county's landmarks, the Sycamore Hall in Topeka, falls to the wrecker's ball.

A group of Lakeland parents, concerned about drug and disciplinary problems at the schools, hold a series of meetings.

The three county high schools graduate 363 seniors.

The Ontario general store, in existence for some 70 years, is closed.

Paul Riddick, 91, publisher of the LaGrange Standard for years, dies. He was a community leader here and was one of the founders of the Sigma Delta Chi, and international journalistic fraternity.

Wolcottville's July 4 celebration was highlighted by the appearance of Ken Kercheval, TV star, who lived in the town as a youngster.

The Fourth of July weekend was marred by severe wind and rain storms. Four persons were injured. The Nauvoo Lake area was the hardest hit. Property damage estimated at more than \$500,000.

The county commissioners announced the

creation of the County Engineering Department and the elimination of the surveyor's office for all intents and purposes.

Cedar Lake Swim School fuss renewed. Classes went ahead, however, with a deputy sheriff standing by.

July temperatures push into the 100-degree range.

Sheriff Howard Chrisman, elected in 1979, announces his retirement. Dale Sturtz, LaGrange, named as his replacement.

Another small neighborhood grocery is closed. Owner Marie Bollman of the Woodruff Grocery called it quits after tending the business since 1941.

J.W. Billman and Son, a firm which had done business on Detroit Street for nearly a half a century, moved to a new location south of LaGrange on Ind. 9.

The LaGrange County Courthouse and the Samuel P. Williams home in Howe are designated national landmarks.

Death claimed two prominent citizens—Gordon E. Smith, chairman of the board of the Shipshewana Bank, and Robert L. Pierce, retired teacher and principal in the LaGrange and Lakeland school systems.

In one of the heaviest turnouts in years, LaGrange County voters gave Ronald Reagan the nod for President and Robert Orr the vote for governor.

LaGrange County farmers donated 200 tons of corn to the starving people of Somalia in Africa.

Operators of the Pumpkin Vine rail line say they can no longer bear the expense of operating freight service between Goshen and Shipshewana.

LaGrange Town board approves cable TV in the community.

Every other street light in LaGrange is shut off to save electricity on the town's electric bill.

1981

Sgt. Robert Meeks, LaGrange County, resigned his post after a series of charges and counter-charges between Meeks and Indiana State Police Superintendent John Shettle. Meeks, a contender for the top police post under the new Republican administration, charged Shettle with scuttling his chances by filing a series of disciplinary charges against Meeks.

The Farmers State Bank at Topeka is robbed of \$4,000 by a man who said he had a gun in his pocket.

The Shipshewana Auction is sold to Shipshewana businessman Robert Lambright and his sons.

Early February brought a winter storm and the closing of schools.

The Lakeland School Board votes to construct a new elementary school at Wolcottville.

Like the rest of the Nation, county residents are shocked at the assassination attempt on President Reagan.

May and June brought the county an extended spell of cool, rainy weather, frustrating farmers trying to complete their spring planting.

Authorities arrest 51 individuals in a "beer bash" north of Shipshewana. They estimate there were some 600 persons at the party.

Russell Schmidt, 50, LaGrange county Court Judge, for about two years, dies. Carl Lundberg, LaGrange attorney, named to replace him.

A survey team estimates the county's crop damage, due to the wet planting season, is \$13.5 million. More than 10 inches of rain fell in June alone.

LaGrange County Library Board announces plans to close the branch

libraries in the county, bringing a chorus of protests from communities which would lose their libraries. After a series of protest meetings, the board announced it would work to keep open or reopen branches in Howe, Topeka and Wolcottville.

Eva Connelly, LaGrange, a community service worker in the county for more than 40 years, was awarded the state's prestigious "Sagamore of the Wabash" citation by Governor Orr.

Howe Military School gets a new superintendent—Brig. Gen. (retired) Eugene D. Scott, who announced increased emphasis would be placed on basic academics at the school.

A group of LaGrange area residents begin a drive to purchase the LaGrange Country Club from Winchester businessman Sherman Armstrong. Asking price—\$150,000.

The Postal Department announces that first class stamps will increase to 20 cents.

The Hochstetler Grain firm in Topeka, is threatened with closure by the Indiana Commodity Dealers licensing agency because of a number of checks outstanding without sufficient funds to cover. Court orders firm to remain open and to concentrate on clearing the bad checks.

Keith Davis, coach and educator in LaGrange County for nearly 20 years, dies.

County farmers send 168 tons of corn, through the Mennonite Central Committee, to the drought-stricken countries of the African Horn.

Leland Frurip, 68, funeral director in LaGrange since 1936, dies.

The LaGrange County Council on Aging receives \$32,000 in federal revenue sharing funds to help finance the purchase of the Waddell Building in LaGrange as a senior center.



REPLACEMENT DISTRIBUTION CENTER
SEALED POWER
CORPORATION
LaGrange, Indiana

LaGrange County Corn S

The LaGrange County Corn School is observing its 77th anniversary this year—marking it as one of the oldest annual festivals in the state.

It is now a festival, homecoming and county celebration all rolled into one. But it didn't start that way.

In 1906, when Corn School was inaugurated, it was described as "one of the most important events in the history of education in the county."

That spring, seed corn was distributed to pupils around the county and they were instructed on the method of selecting and cultivating the grain.

A copy of The LaGrange Standard of later years reported, "The corn patches were duly tended and

the harvest garnered, after which the best ears were selected for competition in a general meet at LaGrange.

"The day, set in the latter part of October was made memorable by a great celebration through the generous cooperation of the businessmen of the county. Governor Hanly was persuaded to drop his work in a busy political campaign to come and talk to the people and shake hands with the children. A long and very attractive parade was formed to meet the governor and escort him through the streets..."

"This corn school helps immensely in the work of unionizing the educational work of the county, but it is probably of greater significance in that it introduces in

a practical way that sort of nature study which will help children to the real education that discovers the why and wherefore of everything true and lovely of good repute in nature herself.

"The additional result expected of an enormous increase in the annual production of wealth in the county recommends corn as a basis of study."

The Corn Schools of those early days were celebrations unequalled in the area. Schools were dismissed so that all the county's students could march in a parade saluting our youngsters...famous speakers—Col. Teddy Roosevelt and the authoress Gene Stratton Porter among them—were an annual feature...competition for the

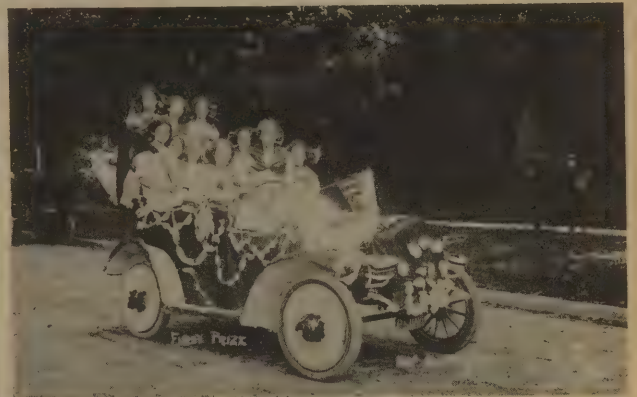
best display of corn was fierce... parades of draft horses and wagons were awesome...and displays of flowers and produce were highlights of the festival.

For a time, the newly-formed 4-H clubs in the county were a part of the celebration with their project exhibits. During those years, the Corn School was celebrated earlier in the year. But, to allow the 4-H'ers to compete in the State Fair an earlier 4-H Fair was established and the Corn School went back to its October setting.

Pictures, it is said, speak better than words, so in this edition we include a series of scenes from earlier Corn Schools which catch the pageantry of our county's annual fall event.



1911 corn exhibit



A Prize winner



A bountiful display from 1910



Scouts on parade



Cow power for these young ladies



Done up in style

School has 77-year history



A later-day Corn School



County Farm entry



The horticulture display

1955



**Corn School's Golden Anniversary.....
and our Queen Float.**

"Helping make LaGrange County beautiful...since 1948.



The Plyley boys



Norm's

Floral Shop

LaGrange, Indiana
Norman W. Duesler

502 N. Detroit St.

Ph. 463-3511



Corn School memories



Flower show goes under a tent



A Ferris Wheel is added



Farm teams on display



Bands were part of the fun



A pilgrim float passes



Tomatoes, Tomatoes, etc.

The fuel depended upon
by your grandparents, and still
available today

Skelgas

...for farm, home, business, motor fuel

"For over forty years"

SHIPSHEWANA SKELGAS SERVICE
State Road 5 North - Shipshewana, Indiana

Topeka evolves from 'Haw Patch'

Topeka, which had its beginnings as Slabtown and HawPatch, came together as a town when the Wabash Railroad came through in 1893.

It had been a small collection of homes and a couple of general stores, plus a saw mill and tannery. With the coming of the railroad, however, there began a growth of small industry which has continued through modern times.

The town was incorporated in 1913. Two years later, a water system was installed. An electric light system followed in quick order. The building of schools also was a priority for the early residents.

At the outset the small village served the needs of the farmers in the area which was level and fertile. They planted, what for that time, were large fields of corn. The History of Northeast Indiana reports that... "Many Indians roundabout this place farmed numerous patches and raise considerable corn but were disgusted at the way white men plowed and harrowed the ground."

In 1846 an area farmer began the growing of mint and making peppermint oil, an industry which became quite large in the days before the Civil War. Other farmers soon followed his lead.

Perhaps the one thing which set Topeka apart from other LaGrange County communities in the late 1800s was the Sycamore Literary Society. It was a lively group whose debates were spirited and sometimes heated.

The History of Northeast Indiana reports that at first the sessions were held in a schoolhouse, but later the old Dunkard Church was purchased, moved and rebuilt at the "Corners." It was a hall 30 by 52 feet and seated 350 persons. The building had a stage and scenery.

The society was incorporated in 1903 and it was decided that the association needed a larger hall.

A community resident, J. N. Babcock armed himself with plans and specifications and the association's charter and left for Cleveland to attempt to interest the famous benefactor, Andrew Carnegie in the new venture.

Carnegie contributed \$4,000 to the construction of a new facility and a Ligonier banker, Jacob Strauss, donated \$4,000 more. Subscriptions from among the members added to the total and soon a fine brick structure with auditorium and stage was finished. It lasted only a short time, however. Fire destroyed the structure April 16, 1915.

By the following December, the building was reconstructed. It included a stage, electric lighting, opera chairs, and was heated by a furnace. That facility was used for many years for all manner of stage shows. It also was the site for graduation ceremonies and other school functions.

In the 1960s, however, the building was used less and less as consolidated schools had their own stages and gyms. The structure

was then torn down.

In these later years, Topeka has continued to attract industry, much of it connected with the mobile

home trade. And the town has continued to be a commercial center for the area farmers—particularly the Amish.



Early day dray wagons in Topeka



Sycamore Hall falls to wrecking ball



Brighton began as prairie farmers center

The village of Brighton began as Lexington. Situated on one of the main prairie trails out of Monguquinnong, and at the edge of rich prairie land, it was one of the first settlements in the county.

The village was laid out in 12 blocks of eight lots each in 1836, and soon was the center for considerable trade from the prairie-land farmers. There were two stores, a blacksmith, a shoemaker, a hotel and a

school at the village in short order.

A log cabin school was begun in 1830 and some six years later a frame schoolhouse was constructed.

History books do not tell us how the name Brighton came to be. But it is assumed that the English settlers living on the English Prairie area near the village may have named it after the British seaside village of Brighton.

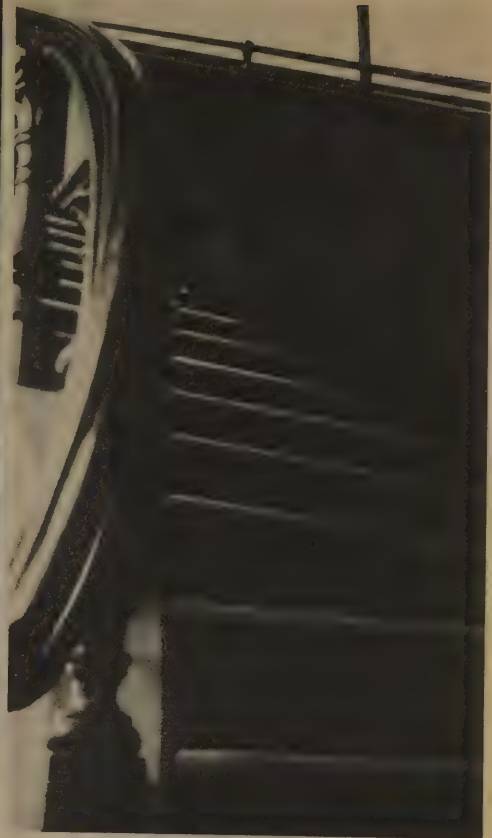
As the years passed, and the needs of the area farmers changed, only two establishments continued to do business in Brighton—the Long general store and the Heign operation, which did everything from the manufacture of cars and bus bodies to blacksmithing and machine shop work.

The village continues to be the site of one of the schools in the Lakeland School system.

Courthouse, inside and out



Summer Wreaths county court house



Iron stairwell an antique

A family tradition for nearly sixty years



LaGrange

1923 Founded by Rollin Carney, Sr. as Music Store and Funeral Parlor, next door to what is now Foltz Bakery.

1934 Relocated to 309 W. Michigan St.

1939 Relocated to 415 E. Michigan St.



Howe

1956 Built present facility at 603 S. Detroit

1980 Incorporated with Gordon Frost in creating Carney-Frost Funeral Home, Inc.

1980 Purchased the Shoup Funeral Home in Howe from Mrs. Irene Shoup. Now known as Shoup-Carney-Frost Funeral Home.

Carney-Frost Funeral Home

LaGrange

Shoup-Carney-Frost Funeral Home

Howe

Courthouse Scenes



Graceful Stairways and woodwork are interior features of the county courthouse



Archways grace the main floor of the courthouse.

Thanks to those who helped us

With this issue we end our series on the history of LaGrange County.

For the most part, it has been a fascinating look into the yesterdays which have shaped the character of our little corner of the world.

We've tried to make it a general view of the development of LaGrange County, focusing on the events—good and bad—which have led us up to today. We have tried to steer clear of family genealogies, although there are many families which have contributed a great deal to our history.

We simply haven't had the space or the time to deal with detailed family histories.

And there have been omissions, we know. For that we apologize. To chronicle more than 150 years of local history is no small task.

But we hope we have caught something of the sense of the sequence of events which have made our county what it is today.

It has been, for the most part, a parade of gentle, hard-working people who have cherished their land, their homes and their way of life here. And, as we've looked back through the years, we've found that things haven't changed all that much.

This enterprise would not have been possible without the help of many people. Contributors to the historical series include:

Scott McKibben, photos and research
Richard Tjarks, research
Marion Deal, photos and research
Lois Redmond, photos
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Johnson, photos
Gerald Fisher, photos and research
Robert Simpson, photos and research
Marguerite Forst, photos and research
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Heign, photos
Mrs. Blanch (Leonard) Myers, photos, research
Lillian Matthews, research, photos
S. E. Scott, research
Diane Miller, research
A. J. Pierson, design work
Joyce Barker, photos
Ada Yoder, Topeka, research
Mrs. Dail Seagley, research
Joseph L. Yoder, research
Marjorie Helmuth, research

And, the people who supported this project through their advertisements:

Sealed Power
Miller's Merry Manor
Lewis and Lambright, Inc.
Grogg-Bachman Realty, Inc.
Shipshewana State Bank
Norm's Floral Shop
Frurip-May Funeral Home
LaGrange County Dodge
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Patterson's Furniture
Citizens Bank and Trust
Brown's Drug Store
Farver Lumber Company
Plyley's Candies
Stopher Photo Center
Carney's Decorating Center
Duo-Therm and the UAW
Carney-Frost Funeral Home
Carney-Frost-Shoup Funeral Home



Current County Officials include (front row) Alice Aker, Clerk, and Earnest Young, Commissioner. Second row, Assessor Martha Cobbs, and County Court Judge Carl Lundberg; Third row, Recorder Ruth Brown and Commissioner Donald (Pete) Curtis Fourth row, Circuit Court Judge Howard Petersen, Auditor Barbara Schemahorn,

Commissioner Robert Lee. Fifth row, Councilman Donald Curtis, Treasurer Irene Shoup, Councilman J. D. Hosteller. Sixth row, Sheriff Dale Sturtz, Councilman James Wire and Councilman Gary Whitcomb. On the top row are Councilman Joe Yoder; Councilman Bernard Hoffman; County Engineer Jack Madden and Councilman Wilbur Groh.



Scott Mill a scenic, Historic site



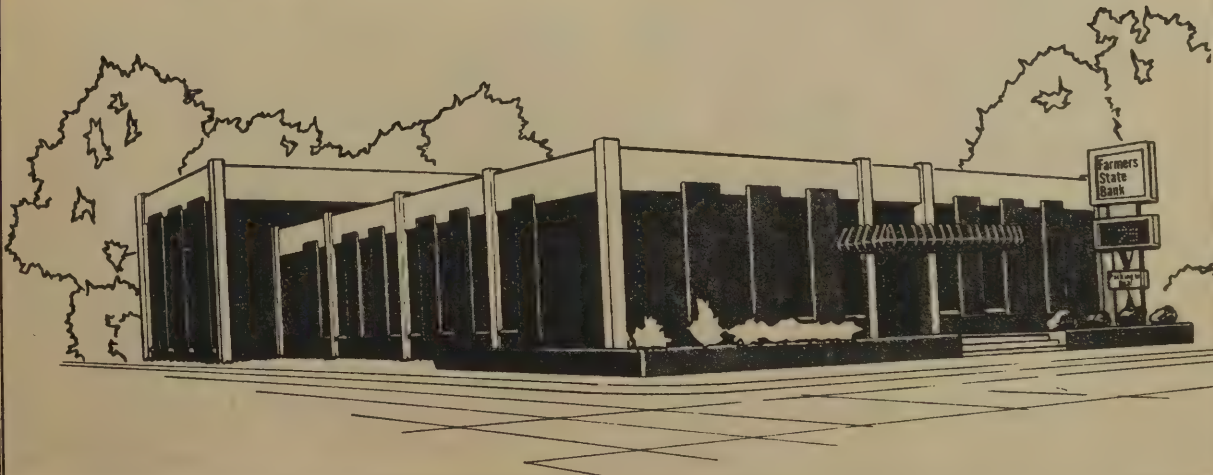
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matters of finance... a place where you
can get straight talk about money matters
... a place where you can get a smile or
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FARMERS STATE BANK

LaGrange, Indiana with branches in Stroh, Topoka and Wokottville

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Shipshewana moved to where the railroad was

Shipshewana is a community which moved to where the railroad was, and after it got there found itself in a feud between two landowners.

Prior to the construction of the Lake Shore and Southern rail line, the only settlement of any size in Newbury Township was Shore, a village of some 25 people on the shore of Hood Lake, soon to be renamed Shore Lake, then Rainbow Lake.

In the 1850s and 60s, it became a trading area for the settlers in the area with a store, post office, a saw mill owned by the Farver brothers, a blacksmith shop, wood-working shop, a cane press and cider mill and a doctor.

In 1888, the railroad came through some two miles north of the little village and Shore's businesses picked up and moved north. This new settlement was platted in 1889 and named after a Potawatomi Chief who lived on the shore of Shipshewana Lake. The town also was named Shipshewana.

Almost immediately there arose a fuss between the two men who owned land where the new town was growing up. Abraham Sumney owned land on the west side of what is now Ind. 5, and Hezekiah Davis owned land on the east side of the roadway.

Neither could agree on where to place the town's main street so each started to lay out "his town" on either side of the road. There was, however, a strip of "no man's land" left in the middle of the two developing areas.

For a time the east side of Shipshewana was called Davis Town and the west, Sumney Town. "Development in Shipshewana was rapid. Brick buildings of modern style went up on every hand," reports the 1930 History of Northeast Indiana.

"A bank, a hotel, a public hall, a Methodist Church, all constructed of beautiful brick, soon beautified the place."

George Curtis, a pioneer resident of the town and the founder of the now-famous Shipshewana Auction, remembered those early days:

"Shipshewana was a pretty lively town in those days. There were many large tracts of timber that had yet to feel the bite of an ax. The big band saw mill there employed a lot of men and it took many log haulers to keep the mill operating. That mill was located where the town park is today and the railroad built a switch line back to the mill.

"I have seen the park stacked full of lumber before the mill burned in 1901. Farver Bros. had a saw-mill three miles south of town, called the Klondike, and all the lumber from those two large mills had to be hauled in to Shipshewana and loaded on flat cars.

"Back in those days there were four saloons here, three blacksmith shops, a



The first train on the Pumpkin Vine pulls into town

hotel, two elevators, a weekly newspaper, an apple dryer, a bank and a laundry.

"Mrs. Sarah R. Davis was president of the bank and Hewlitt Davis was cashier. The bank was only open once in a while. In 1900 L.I. Miller was hired by the bank and it began to be open every day.

"Most everyone in Shipshewana had a small barn to keep logging horses in and their own cow. Each had a fence around their lot.

"Back around 1900, the Valley Line was built and the town had two railroads for awhile. Soon after the auto reduced passenger business and the Valley Line eventually went out of business and the tracks were torn up.

"The L.S. and M.S. ran four passenger trains and two freights each day to the town. Today, one train comes here from Goshen two or three times a week.

"Summey, Kauffman and Big Dan Weaver and several other men built a half-mile race track right in the woods north of town. There was a grand stand 100 ft. long and a judges stand. Outside at the entrance, stables were built for the races horses and a ticket office. Admission was generally 50 cents and hundreds came for the races and tents were put up for eating places. Jake Lupold ran a hack out from town. In those days the horse and buggy was the only way to go.

"Harvest jubilees were held here almost every summer and with all the big fires the people of Shipshewana were kept busy making it the community it is today.

"The Methodist Church was built back in 1893 on the east side of town and the Congregational Church was built on the west side about 1906. During the years I have seen Shipshewana grow from board sidewalks to its present size.

"After the death of Davis, when his estate was settled, the 150 foot strip of land dividing east town and west town called "No Man's Land" had to be sold. It was laid out in lots and sold at auction. Today the land is all built up with nice buildings.

"All through the years Ship-she-wa-na has been a real friendly town to live in."

Curtis created the auction which has become an attraction throughout the Midwest in 1922, when he offered for sale at his farm just east of Shipshewana six pens of pigs and several head of cattle. The success of that first sale prompted Curtis to hold another several weeks later and finally the Shipshewana Community Sale was held regularly the last Friday of every month.

In 1927, Curtis built the first sale barn and holding pens and continued to manage the operation until 1946 when he sold it to Fred Lambright. It was Lambright who put up the buildings south of Shipshewana on Ind. 5 and changed the name to the Shipshewana Auction. Upon Lambright's death in 1966,

the business was purchased by Walter Schrock, who recently sold the business to Robert Lambright and sons.

Curtis became something of a legend in his town. He made the town into a thriving

business center; he organized the first band in 1902 and 10 years later organized a girl's band. His bands marched in the Corn School for the first 15 years of the fall festival's existence.



Logging was the town's major business



Fire devours the auction barn

Postmaster gives Emma its name

The tiny community of Eden Mills sitting at the corners of Eden, Clearspring, Newbury and Clay Townships got a post office back in 1800.

What would be the name?, the postal authorities asked of Mrs. E. M. Speed, then postmistress of LaGrange.

Mrs. Speed said she would like to have it named for her daughter, Emma.

So the Emma postoffice functioned from 1880 to May 15, 1903, when it was discontinued. An earlier postoffice had functioned there from 1863 to 1875.

The community, also called Emmatown, has not grown all that much through the years. It has had a general store for most of the years of its existence, owned for much of the time by Howard Fought who described his business as being in "Beautiful, downtown Emma."



The Davis' (above and the Sumneys (below) divided the Town of Shipshewana in its early days.



Shipshewana main street in early days.

County contributes to later-year wars

LaGrange County has a total of 2,230 veterans, of whom 1,840 served during a war-time period in the post Civil War era. The county had approximately 1,260 young men and women in the service during World War II. Of that number 35 died while in service.

Statistics show that 910 served during the Vietnam era, and more than one-fourth of those served in a combat area during the nearly 11-year war. There are no statistics

on how many of the LaGrange County youth died in that war.

The Veterans Administration reports that there are some 300 Korean War veterans in the county; 640 World War II veterans, and still some 40 veterans from World War I in the county.

Since the ending of the Vietnam War, 150 persons from LaGrange County have served in the armed forces. There are an additional 240 individuals who were in service between the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam Era.



World War III monument contains more than 1,200 names

1939 -

Store started by Charles Skinner



June 1978 - The Challenge



Today - The Triumph



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Elmira, Stroh products of cement factory

The development of Elmira and Stroh, one could say, began with a fishing trip in the late 1800s.

A Detroit man, Emil Stroh, was visiting with his wife's relatives in Indiana when he decided to try his hand at fishing on Big Turkey Lake, lying peacefully in a valley with a little creek trickling into it from the south and running out on the north to join the waters of another smaller lake.

On one of his treks back from the fishing boat, he noticed marl clinging to his shoes. He scraped it off, took it back to Detroit and had it analyzed.

As he suspected, it was a very high grade marl—one of the major ingredients for the making of cement. A few questions about the land bordering the lake also brought out the fact that much of it was clay—another important element in cement-making.

Stroh's next move was to buy land for the development of a cement plant and to form the Wabash Portland Cement Company. In short order a plant site was selected on the west side of Big Turkey and a railroad spur was constructed from the Wabash line at Helmer to the plant.

The construction of the plant and the beginning of operations there attracted workers for miles around. Some settled in the village of Hayward, soon renamed Stroh, and others in Elmira. Many lived in tents or makeshift shanties until homes could be built.

The question came up on the combining of the two towns into one. Residents of Stroh and Elmira refused to become incorporated with the other, so the two villages, separated by Turkey Creek, remained separated.

The cement plant, one of the biggest industrial undertakings in the county, began operations in 1900 and the work was anything but easy for the employees.

At first both marl and clay were dug by hand and hauled to the mixing mill with

horse and wagon and with horses pulling small cars on rail lines. Later a crane with a clamshell dipper was used to pull the marl from the lake water and a small steam engine pulled six or eight cars to the mill.

As the cement plant operations grew, so did the towns of Stroh and Elmira.

A general store was opened in Stroh in about 1901, then came a grain elevator and a flour mill, run by Henry Rinkle. More general stores were opened, as was a drug store, ice cream parlor, poolroom, bakery and a newspaper, "The Stroh Times."

There was a photo gallery, jewelry store, a movie theater, barbershop, livery stable, blacksmith and harness repair shop, and a hardware. A post office was established in 1900.

Meanwhile, Elmira boasted of a livery, grocery, hardware, meat market, millinery shop, a hotel, hardware and a saloon and poolroom.

At the height of the cement company's operations it was reported there were some five saloons in Stroh.

In the off season, when the lake was frozen, an ice harvesting and shipping business was in full swing, shipping as many as 24 carloads of ice from Turkey Lake a day.

There also was a stockyard developed along the railroad spur and in 1930 a daily livestock market was opened.

The Stroh Farmers Bank was organized in 1915 in the bustling community.

The land around Stroh and Elmira not only produced the elements for cement, it was perfect for growing onions. A sizeable operation developed between 1912 and 1930 with as many as 80 railcar-loads of onions being shipped out in a season.

Following are some excerpts from an account written by Marguerite Forst in 1969 on the cement plant's operation:

"Another building on company grounds a short distance from the plant was the laboratory.

The ground floor was offices of business as well as the chemical testing department. The second floor housed living quarters for the Stroh family. Up on the third floor were the kitchen, dining and entertainment, all in one big room.

The family always had a big Christmas tree there, with a present for each child in the two villages.

Clay hauled from pits was dumped into a shed. Three men, using wheelbarrows put clay into a grinder, then it was sent to dryers. When the clay was dry, it was put into slurry tanks and the wet marl was added.

The slurry tanks had steel arms, with chains attached, and went around constantly stirring the mixture.

The mixture was pumped into trough-like affairs that took it to kilns to dry. The dry substance was called klinkers. Gypsum was added and ground again. The klinkers came out too hot to handle or grind, and were put outside to cool.

Small stones were used in grinding. People would pick stones out of fields and sell to the factory by the perch.

Final grinding produced cement, which was stored in cone shaped bins, large end up, seven in all. A spout and level were at the bottom. Three men worked at the spout. One worked the lever, put cement into bags on scales. Each sack weighed 97½ pounds. The second man tied the sacks, put them on a truck, and the third man trucked sacks to a railroad car. Six hundred sacks a day was the quota. They received one cent per sack or \$2 each per day if they made their quota.

The grinding roar of the machinery was heard far out into the country. The whistle could be heard for miles. It was a dependable guide for the vicinity. Men went to work by it, women planned their work and meals.

Accidents were bound to happen.

One young man became caught in a conveyor that went round and round, taking hot cement into bins, he yelled, but before help

arrived, his legs were ground off to his hips.

Gases from kilns also killed. In 1918, the factory was remodeled. Eight or nine small kilns were replaced with three large ones. Two turbine engines, run by steam, were installed for electricity.

At the start, 1,000 barrels a day were produced. After modern equipment was installed, 2,800 barrels a day could be produced.

Soon after the modernization, one man cleaning cement that was stuck to the side of the bin, lost his footing, fell into powdery cement and smothered. It took two such deaths before they fastened a rope to the workers when they entered a bin and a man called a "watcher" sat up above holding the ropes.

Two electricians lost lives from burns suffered from an explosion while working in the engine room.

There was one death never solved—the night watchman came up missing. A thorough search was made but to no avail.

A cranesman on the dragline used to dip marl from the lake, one morning came up with the night watchman in the dipper. He was still clutching a lantern in his hand.

We finish the story in 1969. The hum and roar of the mighty machinery have been silent nearly three decades. The whistle that was heard promptly at five and six o'clock in the morning and again at five and six in the evening died out in the fall of 1941 when the cement plant ceased operations for good.

The laboratory building has been kept in good repair through the years. It stands as a silent sentinel guarding the secrets, ambitions and the struggles of the past.

And so closes another chapter depicting the hopes, aspirations and ambitions of man. It is the story of the dreams, plans and designs of a handful of men—an adventure that flourished for a time and then ceased to be.

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LaGrange, Indiana

Newspapers came and went during county's history

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following account of LaGrange County's newspaper history comes from the 1920 History of Northeastern Indiana:

The earliest newspaper in LaGrange County was the LaGrange Freeman, established in July 1842, at Ontario, with Samuel Hemingway, Jr., as editor. It supported the whig ticket, supporting Samuel Bigger for governor. It was a fairly well printed paper, and in form and size was a six-column folio. After continuing two years it ceased to exist and the material was utilized in starting the LaGrange Whig at Lima, in 1845, with James Castle as its editor and publisher. The People's Advocate was started at Ontario in 1844, by James M. Flagg, an attorney. Early in 1845 this paper was removed to the Village of Lima, then the county seat and its name was changed to the LaGrange Advocate.

This was a six-column folio whig paper well edited and neatly printed, but contained no local or personal items (this was not in style then), but the editorials consisted of long paragraphs on weighty political topics, as if the destiny of the world hung on the writings of the editor!

The LaGrange Advocate soon merged with the Lima Whig, which continued until 1855, then passed into the hands of C. D. Y. Alexander and was soon discontinued. In October, 1845, Messrs. Jewett, Owen and Bennett started the LaGrange Democrat, which advocated democratic principles for about five years, then was suspended.

The first newspaper to be established at LaGrange village, after it had become the county seat, was the Herald by G. D. Stancliff, in 1856. It succeeded in running for a year and dropped from view. In December, 1856, however, John K. Morrow of Bryan, Ohio moved in a large Washington hand press and material for the publication of a paper to be known as the LaGrange Standard, which newspaper has continued ever since.

The publication of the LaGrange Standard was begun early in 1857 by John K. Morrow, who brought the hand press and type overland from Bryan, Ohio, in December, 1856. This was the first republican paper in the county, the party having been started in that year. Previously the Herald had been published at LaGrange for a few months in 1856 by G. D. Stancliff, and other papers had been published in the county, for various periods, from as early as 1842, at Ontario and Lima. At the beginning of the Standard an interest was held by a Mr. Rayhouser, who sold it to C.D.Y. Alexander of Lima, who sold to Joseph B. Wade, who sold the interest to John D. Devor in December, 1859. Devor was a cousin of John D. DeFreees, founder, about this time of the Indiana State Journal. In April, 1860, Dr. Charles O. Myers became sole owner of the Standard. He conducted it during the first years of the war for the Union, and in 1863 sold to Thomas S. Taylor. Taylor had a few months before this started the Union at Howe, the outfit for which he traded to Myers, who moved it to Kendallville and started the Standard there, which is yet published. November 22, 1867 the LaGrange Standard passed into the hands of Dr. John H. Rerick, lately surgeon of the Forty-fourth Regiment Indiana Volunteers, who had been a frequent contributor to the Standard for several years. After his election as clerk of the circuit court Doctor Rerick sold the paper to John D. Devor, who owned from May, 1869, to July 1872 when Doctor Rerick bought the paper back. He continued as the owner without interruption until his death in January 1911.

Doctor Rerick brought the first power press into the county, operated at first by steam power, in 1874, and a Mergenthaler Linotype was added to the equipment in 1913.

Before the death of Doctor Rerick the paper was leased for several years by Carl H. Rerick, at first in partnership with George C. Morgan, until the latter was elected county clerk, and after 1907 the publisher was Rowland H. Rerick, who became the owner in 1914. Robert M. Waddell has been associate editor and advertising manager since 1906.

Reform of the divorce laws, local railroad development, reform of banking laws, abolition of saloons, the progressive

movement in 1912, municipal improvements, including the Carnegie Library and the Corn School are notable among the objects championed by the Standard during the past forty years.

During the life of the paper most men and women of literary inclination in the county have contributed to its columns. Among them may be recalled W. E. Robinson, Silas B. McManus, and A.A. Wade of Howe; A. E. Keagy of Greenfield Mills; Hiram Smith of Mongo; Mrs. Ned Spero of Brushy Prairie; Frank Spaulding of South Milford; J. Norman Babcock of Topeka; U. E. Mast of Shipshewana; Dr. F. P. Griffith, Chris Y. Roop and Cary R. Frisbey of LaGrange.

The LaGrange Democrat was established in 1859, by J. S. Castle at LaGrange. He conducted it there one year and removed it to Lima, where it ran until 1862 when it suspended publication entirely. In 1868, through a joint stock company, made up of various leading democrats in this county, established another paper called the Democrat, with Francis Henry and Howard M. Coe as editors and publishers. This took active part in the campaign of 1868, when U. S. Grant was elected President as against Seymour (democratic) of New York. April, 1869, this office was destroyed by a fire which swept all in its pathway - the largest fire the town had ever had to that date. The leading democrats came to the front and purchased new material and started the paper again. Mr. Henry soon abandoned the office, and Mr. Coe continued alone until 1870, when the office was closed, and a year later the material was bought by Hiram A. Sweet, who started the LaGrange Independent. A Bayliss bought an interest in the paper in 1872, but the next year sold back to Sweet, who in 1874 moved the plant to Sturgis, Michigan.

In the spring of 1874, A. H. Wait, of Sturgis, Michigan, started the Register at Wolcottville, but in a few months he sold to James R. Rheubottom. S. D. Crane of LaGrange purchased an interest in this publication, and in March, 1876, bought the remaining interest and moved the office to LaGrange, changing the name of the paper to the LaGrange Register, the first copy of which was issued in April 1876. J. C. Hewett soon bought the entire office interest. In 1881 he put in a Campbell power press.

James R. Rheubottom established the Wolcottville Gazette in June 1876, and in 1878 sold to I. W. Lohman, who soon removed it to Rome City, Noble County, ran it for a time and finally sent the material to Indianapolis.

In 1881 the record shows that the only newspapers in LaGrange County were the Standard, the Register and the Democrat.

The LaGrange Democrat was established at LaGrange November 13, 1879, by J. Frank Snyder, and was later the property of H. O. Eldridge, until purchased by its present owner, H. S. Bartholomew. It is the direct successor of the Old Democrat and the Saturday Call, the name now being Democrat-Call. This was the second "Democrat" established here, the first being in 1859.

Politically, it is a Democratic paper of no uncertain sound. Its form and size is that of a six-column quarto paper. It circulates largely within LaGrange County. It is printed each Wednesday, at the subscription rate of \$1.50. This newspaper is published on Spring Street in a leased building and is run from a Babcock cylinder printing press. The present editor and owner of the Democrat-Call is a forceful writer and has a good patronage. Many homes in this county are greeted each week by the appearance of this well managed newspaper, giving all of the best of news that is of interest to the general public.

The Saturday Call was established by W. D. Rheubottom in 1882 and sold to H. O. Eldridge, who merged it with the Democrat calling it the Democrat-Call as before noted.

THE WOLCOTTVILLE HERALD

This newspaper was established by Frank R. Tallman, and since then its owners have been: C.E. Troxel, O.L. Patten, F.A. Hunter, Howard W. Scheneman and Russell C. Eshelman. Politically the Herald is a republican paper. In form and size it is a six-column four-page paper, printed on

Wednesday of each week at a subscription rate of \$1.50 in advance. It has a good circulation in LaGrange and Noble counties. It has in connection a good job printing office, and runs its newspaper on a Whitlock printing press. The office building is leased by the proprietor of the Herald.

FOOTNOTE: The LaGrange Standard was purchased from the Rerick family in 1928 by Paul Riddick. Riddick, a publisher in Michigan before he acquired The Standard, also purchased an interest in The LaGrange

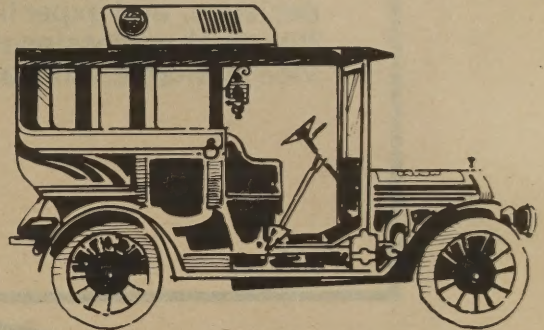
News and formed the LaGrange Publishing Company.

Riddick published The Standard for three decades, and in the course of those years brought the newspaper through the Great Depression and kept improving the production equipment as he did.

Riddick sold the publishing firm to Eugene Marten in the late 1960s. Marten was the publisher until the late 1970s when William F. Connelly was named publisher and editor. Connelly is now president of the LaGrange Publishing Company.



The Standard Offices in an earlier day.



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We invite you to come into the bank at any time to discuss your financial needs with one of our officers. As always, their insight, experience, and expertise will provide you with the most professional, personal banking service available. And, as always, "we listen."



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